



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Sunshine between showers

(R45P) 40p

Essay

John Lyttle on Madonna and child page 18

Education+
TOMORROW: 28-page pull-out packed with higher education appointments

The Tabloid

Bridget Jones: bad hair day
page 3

Does our whole view of England come from Rubens?



England's assumed supremacy in landscape painting will be challenged by a new exhibition of Rubens, Neil McGregor, director of the National Gallery, said yesterday. David Lowy, writer.

Rubens's view of Flanders' landscape," he said. "What we think of as a highly English genre was in fact international."

Rubens which inspired Constable's *The Hay-Wain*. The similarities are enormous," he added. Last night the Flemish Minister of Culture, who was captured with the exhibition, presented the National Gallery with £100,000 to devote one of its soon to be

refurbished rooms to Flemish art - an unprecedented event for the London gallery. Rubens's Landscapes is part of the series Making and Meaning, sponsored by Esso at the National Gallery's Salisbury Wing, until 19 January 1997.

BSE fear for millions of British pets

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

A change in government policy suggests that millions of British domestic cats are being fed BSE-contaminated food. A minister has announced a ban on all production of pet food in any building used for the manufacture of livestock feed.

Angela Browning, an agriculture minister, has confirmed to the Commons in a written reply that mammalian meat and bone meal (MBM) - powdered residue from culled and rendered cattle - is used in pet food. But she has also told Martyn Jones, a microbiologist and Labour MP: "Because of our concerns that petfood containing MBM might present a possible risk of cross-contamination of livestock feed, new measures to prevent this were introduced on 1 August."

"The Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy order 1996 now prohibits the production of this material [pet food containing MBM] on the same premises as livestock feed unless this takes place in a separate building and there is no contact with equipment or vehicles used in the production of livestock feed."

Mr Jones said last night: "This is an astounding revelation. This stuff is so risky that they are not even allowed to bury it. Instead, they are getting rid of it by passing it on to pet-food manufacturers."

"It is probably being used in every cat food, as a filler; duck liver, tuna, you name it. The Government is quite clearly trying to get out of a hole by getting rid of it in this way."

A Ministry of Agriculture spokesman said last night that there was no risk to household pets from MBM in petfood "because they are meat-eaters".

But a Commons select committee investigation into BSE was told in April that cats had tested positive for a form of spongiform encephalopathy.



The committee was also told that while the high-risk specified bovine material - such as spinal chord - would be incinerated, "sides of meat will be rendered into meat and bone meal which will then be disposed of, either by landfill or incineration."

There was no mention of MBM being used in pet food.

Mr Jones asked Mrs Browning earlier this week how much MBM from bovine sources was being used in pet food, and the minister told him that no figures were available. The spokesman said: "You will have to ask the manufacturers."

But the August ban on joint pet food and livestock feed manufacture also required "that all movements and use of MBM have to be recorded and accompanied by appropriate documentation."

Mr Jones said he was dismayed by the ministry response. "They have claimed from day one of this BSE crisis that it was caused by meat and bone meal. We also know that cats can be infected. He added: "If the risk is so great, why are they feeding it to our pets?"

Handgun ban in sight as MPs back parents

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government was warned it would be defeated if it fails to deliver a total ban on the private ownership of handguns today in the face of public demands for action and the real threat of being outflanked by Labour after the Dunblane massacre.

Ministers are believed to be preparing a complete ban on all semi-automatic weapons of the type used at Dunblane, going further than the Cullen report after the murders of 16 children and a teacher, to head off the demands for tougher action.

The action was agreed by a

Cabinet committee chaired by John Major and the details will be announced in statements by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, and Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland. It could allow .22 calibre weapons in gun clubs but ban most other handguns.

A cross-party Commons motion, signed by two Tory MPs, Hugh Dykes and Robert Hughes, was tabled to bolster those in the Government including Mr Forsyth calling for a complete ban on all handguns, with the threat that it could be defeated if it bows to the pressure from the gun lobby.

The motion called for "im-

mediate legislation to raise handguns to the status of prohibited weapons whose use will be restricted to those who can demonstrate a professional need such as the military and the police."

Mr Dykes, MP for Harrow East, said: "There is a very large majority in the House for complete prohibition. A partial ban would create a loophole," he warned.

"That is the really sick-making consequence of this matter. It is an unrivalled opportunity for us in Britain to get away from the American gun culture which is beginning to take root in this country."

Labour moved last night to toughen its policy and threaten a total ban on all handguns. In May, Labour said it favoured a ban with the exception of the .22 Olympic-calibre pistols, but Tony Blair agreed a change of policy in a meeting at Westminster with Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary, and George Robertson, shadow Scottish secretary.

Sources at Westminster said the pincer movement on the Cabinet could lead to a tougher-than-expected response to the report by Lord Cullen.

The Government faced a powerful backlash in the

summer when it was disclosed that six Tory members of the Commons Select Committee on Home Affairs had refused to back a total ban.

The Prime Minister and Mr Forsyth have been moved by the tragedy at Dunblane to back a ban on handguns. It was expected that Lord Cullen would recommend a total ban on handguns in private hands but allowing the possession of handguns in gun clubs providing there was more rigid security, including metal detectors, and tighter restrictions on licensing club members.

Ministers had a long and difficult meeting yesterday and

there were differences of opinion over the practicalities of banning handguns, but Whitehall sources said last night that they had emerged in full agreement at the action to be taken.

"The statement will be definitive and it will be clear. They are confident they can carry colleagues and the country with them," said a source.

Legislation to implement the ban on handguns will be introduced in the Queen's Speech next week. Lord Cullen was said to have taken a pragmatic approach, and has been careful to highlight the difficulties in defining handguns to be banned.

Belgium erupts in judge's defence

Catherine Butler
ussels

A surge of spontaneous public emotion swept across normally placid Belgium yesterday after the sacking of the crusading judge who led the inquiry into the country's child sex and murder scandals. This triggered strikes in cities and towns throughout the country, protests angrily directed at the state itself.

The government insisted that the removal of Judge Jean-Marc Connerotte, a national hero since his investigating team rescued two children from child rapist Marc Dutroux's cellar in August, will not deflect the inquiries.

But it seems to have been the last straw for a people sickened by the Dutroux case and whose confidence in the institutions that govern them has been shattered by it and a series of corruption scandals.

Factories and offices were at a standstill as thousands of employees stopped work in protest at the judge's sacking. Public transport came to a halt. Seven hundred workers at a Volkswagen plant near Brussels marched on the city's Palais de Justice, the imposing symbol of the judiciary in the centre of town. Hundreds of demonstrators staged a sit-

in there, some in tears, other vowing to go on hunger strike. "He was the only person we trusted. The workers have no confidence in anyone else," said union representative Hedwin De Clercq who led the march.

Firemen in Charleroi, the birthplace of Dutroux, turned their water cannon on the city's court building to "clean up the judiciary".

In nearby Liege, the fire brigade sounded the sirens of their engines in front of the city's courts and hundreds of work colleagues of Gino Russo, father of one of Dutroux's eight-year-old victims, walked off the factory floor. Bus drivers throughout Wallonia, Belgium's French-speaking region, abandoned their vehicles in the streets. In Dutch-speaking Flanders, supporters of Judge Connerotte staged a sit-in on the steps of the Antwerp law courts.

Connerotte, known affectionately as "le petit juge" was held by the High Court on Monday to have compromised his impartiality when he attended a fundraising event organised by a support group for victims of child sex abuse. He was targeted by lawyers defending Dutroux after being photographed eating a free bowl of spaghetti and accepting a small gift.

Minister faces debate on conduct

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

David Willetts, a Treasury minister, faces an emergency debate in the Commons today on allegations that he tried to influence a select committee inquiry into the cash-for-questions scandal.

Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker, yesterday announced that the allegations were serious enough to warrant discussion on the floor of the House. MPs are expected to agree in a short debate to an investigation by the Standards and Privileges Committee.

Just before the Speaker's surprise statement, the Prime Minister had been forced onto the defensive over the allegations by Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, who demanded: "Is it right for the Government to seek to interfere in or manipulate the outcome of a select committee of Parliament?" John Major replied: "There is nobody in this House more concerned than I am that the matter should be properly investigated."

Mr Willetts, the Paymaster General, is said to have canvassed ways of playing down the cash-for-questions affair with the chairman of the committee investigating them, Sir Geoffrey Johnson-

Smith. According to a note obtained by *The Guardian* in the preparation of its defence against a now-abandoned libel action brought by Neil Hamilton, the former trade minister, Mr Willetts floated the possibility of "exploiting the good Tory majority" on the committee to ensure the issue was dealt with as quickly as possible.

Or, it was apparently suggested, the committee could decide to defer any investigation citing Mr Hamilton's pending libel action - which is what the committee's Tory majority decided.

Mr Willetts has said the note has been taken out of context, and last night issued a statement welcoming Ms Boothroyd's decision. She told the Commons that Andrew Miller, Labour MP for Ellesmere Port and Neston, had written to her about allegations that "improper pressure was brought to bear on the Select Committee on Members' Interests in 1994".

A motion was being drafted last night by Mr Miller - a loyal Labour backbencher acting in concert with the whips office. The motion is likely simply to suggest that Mr Willetts has a case to answer, and that the issue should be referred to the Standards Committee.

Andrew Marr, page 17

QUICKLY

Hussein returns
King Hussein, with Yasser Arafat, returned to the West Bank for the first time since the Jordanian army was defeated by Israel in 1967. Page 11

Murdoch's weapon
Media mogul Rupert Murdoch is planning to use sport as a "battering ram" for the expansion of his global pay television network. Page 28

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Neil fired because of Murdoch's TV interests

Story on Pergau dam affair upset proprietor's plans for Asia channel

CHRIS BLACKHURST

Andrew Neil was dismissed as editor of the *Sunday Times* with a £1m pay-off because Rupert Murdoch, the owner, feared his television interests in Asia would be damaged by the paper's allegations about the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamed.

According to his autobiography, to be published this month, Mr Neil insisted on a "golden parachute" agreement to pay him £1m to leave after Mr Murdoch became alarmed at repercussions for his media operations in the Far East and South-East Asia. Mr Murdoch owns Star TV, the satellite channel which is beamed into millions of homes in India, China and the booming tiger economies of South-East Asia from Hong Kong.

Mr Neil was moved to front a new current-affairs show on

Fox TV in the United States - after receiving his pay-off.

According to the book, Ministers told Mr Neil and the *Sunday Times* that a deal had been worked out between Mr Murdoch and Dr Mahathir under which Mr Neil's head was offered on a plate in return for the media tycoon being allowed to do business in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir complained directly to Mr Murdoch about the *Sunday Times*'s claim about the Malaysian Prime Minister's business dealings. Mr Murdoch soothed him by saying Mr Neil was a "rogue editor" and would be sorted out.

The newspaper chief's overriding concern was the fall-out from Mr Murdoch's claim about the Malaysian Prime Minister's business dealings. Mr Murdoch soothed him by saying Mr Neil was a "rogue editor" and would be sorted out.



In the limelight: Andrew Neil in his office at the *Sunday Times* in Wapping

Photograph: Brian Harris

international tycoon. But the book makes plain that it was his paper's onslaught against Dr Mahathir and the Malaysian leader's violent reaction which provoked his demise.

Ironically, one economy it does not reach is Malaysia, where Dr Mahathir regards it as too Western. However, Mr Murdoch was determined to crack the country which has the fastest-growing economy in the region.

Mr Murdoch was incandescent with rage at the paper's report in early 1994 about Dr Mahathir.

Mr Neil's disclosures in his book, *Full Disclosure*, are bound to damage relations between Mr Murdoch and Mr Mahathir, not least because Mr Neil stands by his paper's story.

It will seriously embarrass Mr Murdoch, who is sensitive to claims that his wider business affairs hold sway over his domestic British newspaper and television operations.

Dr Mahathir's response to the article in 1994 was to impose

a blockade on British companies dealing with Malaysia.

While that ban was eventually lifted, Mr Neil says he was in no doubt that Mr Murdoch was worried about losing his Star TV channel, which he wanted to broadcast in Malaysia and across South East Asia.

In order to placate the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mr Neil makes plain for the first time, he was moved to America, to Fox TV, another Murdoch station.

While the job at Fox was exciting, it achieved Mr Murdoch's initial purpose: to get rid of an awkward editor. If Mr Neil was a success in the post, as an editor on a new primetime current-affairs show, all well and good. If he was not, he could be dealt with later.

Subsequently, the two became favourites: Dr Mahathir was guest of honour at Mr Murdoch's conference for senior executives in Australia also attended by Tony Blair.

Battersea-ram, page 21

Leeson boss 'deserved no big bonus'

The boss of the jailed trader Nick Leeson, who was promised a £500,000 bonus hours before Barings collapsed, should in hindsight have been offered something minimal instead, the bank's deputy chairman said yesterday.

Andrew Tuckey is said to have promised Mary Walz the huge award 13 hours before news broke of the disaster which Leeson caused in Singapore.

Mr Tuckey told a tribunal that even if Leeson's activities had been uncovered earlier, her bonus would have been "minimal".

"In retrospect our assessment of the financial products group's profits was way out," he said. "Mary Walz had failed to understand, along with others, what Nick Leeson was doing. If we had detected Nick Leeson earlier she probably would have received a minimal bonus."

He added: "I did not know anything of the disaster that had overwhelmed Barings until midnight that day."

Nicholas Underhill QC, for the bank, asked whether Ms Walz would have received a bonus if the bank had known about Leeson's disastrous losses on the day the bonus were handed out.

Mr Tuckey replied: "No. I would have cancelled all those conversations." He admitted that he had praised Ms Walz and handed her a note informing her of her £500,000 bonus, but claimed that it was only provisional.

"I handed over the paper bearing the words 'Mary Walz - £500,000'," he said. "I was seeing 40 other people over a period of two days. The slip of paper had no legal significance - it was just to make sure there were no mistakes."

"I wrote the note just before she walked in. I did not say it was provisional because it seemed obvious. It was inconceivable that a director could not have been aware of this."

"I told her she had had a fantastic year. The department had substantially outstripped any other area of the business for the year in question."

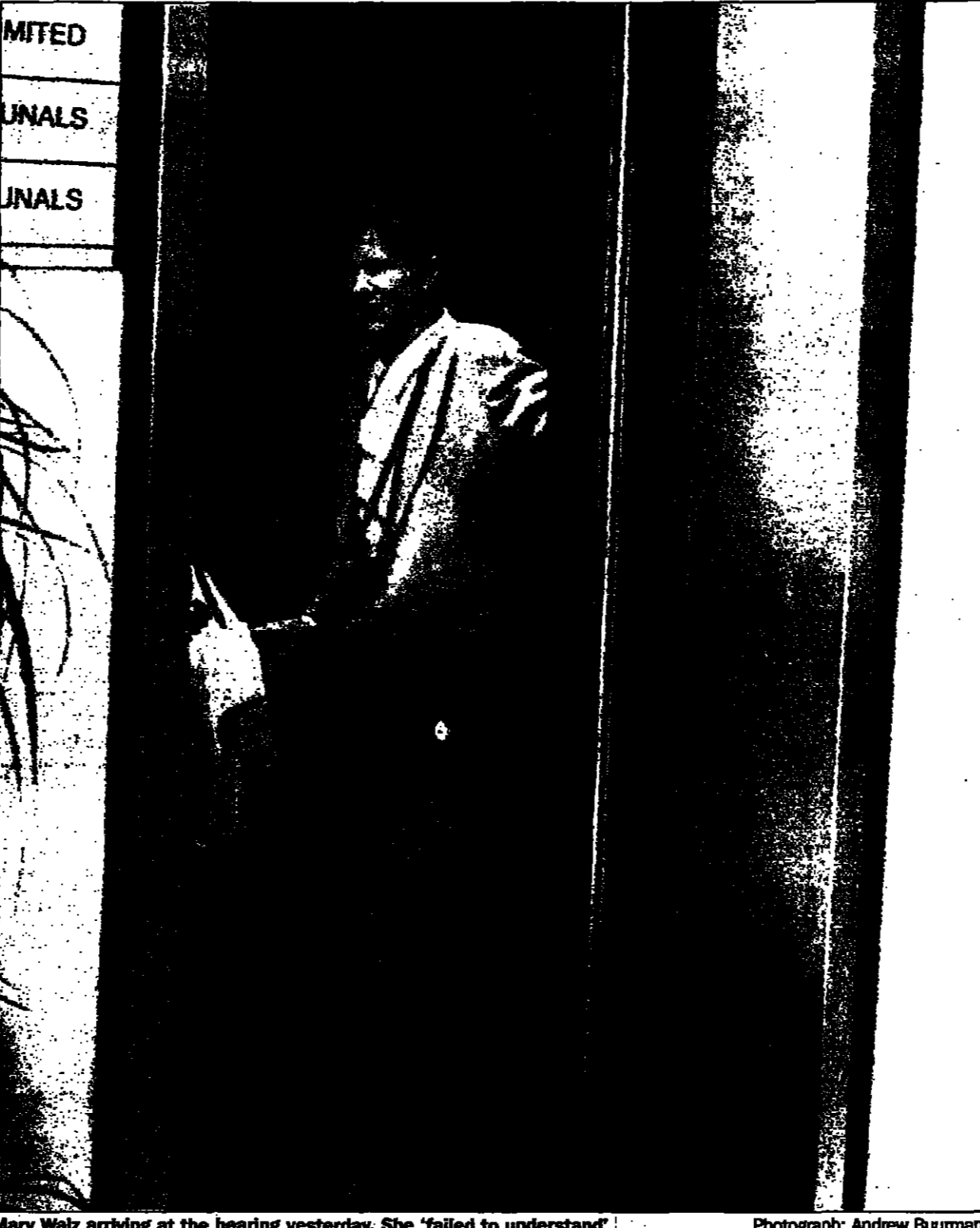
"The performance of the equity group was very remarkable although other parts of the business were also profitable. It was the most exceptional part of the business."

Mr Tuckey told the hearing that bonuses in Ms Walz's department had to be profit-related to encourage success.

"The profit of an individual unit was not the only factor but in the case of the financial products groups this was a new business in a very competitive market," he said.

Bonuses in her department were more reliant on profit than any other within the bank. "Profitability was by far and away the most important aspect," Mr Tuckey said.

Ms Walz claims the £500,000 bonus under the Wages Act. The hearing at Stratford, east London, continues.



Mary Walz arriving at the hearing yesterday. She 'failed to understand'

Photograph: Andrew Buerman

Yes, work is the curse of the drinking classes

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Men who believe work is the curse of the drinking classes may have got it right after all.

The irredeemably sober Policy Studies Institute has discovered that males with "ambition" and a big thirst for alcohol have a better chance of finding employment if they lose their jobs than bosses' pets who drink in moderation.

In its report *Long Term Unemployment*, the institute ventures that big drinkers often collect pub cronies who can make useful contacts during job-hunting.

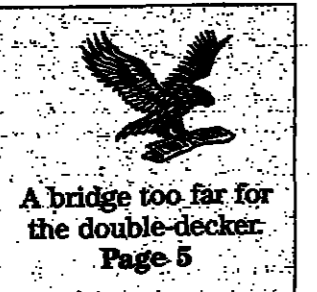
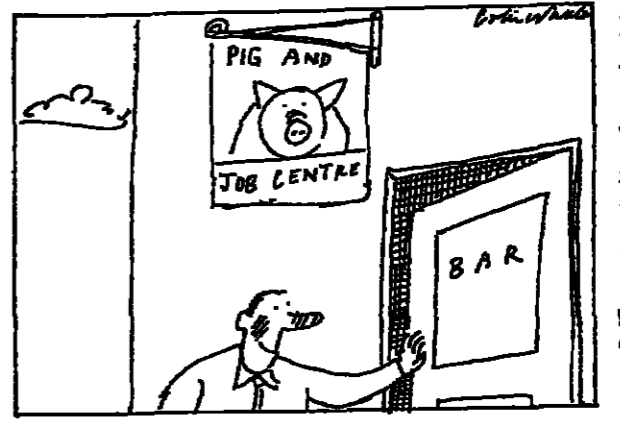
An analysis of figures prepared for the Department of Education and Employment reveals that men with a "favourable attitude to work" were at greater risk of redundancy than those with a more negative approach.

Co-author of the report, Joan Payne, believes the awkward squad that spends most time in the pub might be more outgoing and self-confident and therefore more employable despite their penchant for alcohol.

But less encouraging for the macho pub-goer is the finding that men tend to fall apart after divorce or separation. Drawing on data from two national surveys, the *National Child Development Study* and the *Retirement Study*, it was found that unemployed men who break up with their wife or partner are less likely to find work, while the chances of women in a similar position are greatly enhanced.

In early adulthood the risk of long-term unemployment can vary enormously. A Scottish man with no children and no qualifications who works in a personal service or a semi-skilled job and who has been unemployed in the past, was highly likely to experience a long spell out of work.

A professional man living in Greater London, trained and educated to degree level, with a driving licence, no children and no previous history of unemployment had a "near zero risk" of being on the dole for any length of time. Presumably his chances of being out of work were greatly enhanced if he was teetotal and dead keen.



A bridge too far for the double-decker. Page 5

NATIONAL SAVINGS

Investment Ideas

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Reservoir plan for a hot, dry Britain

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Britain's big, privatised water companies yesterday began a campaign to build huge new reservoirs and add to supplies, claiming that climate change was forcing their hand.

The Water Services Association, which represents nine of the ten large drinking-water and sewage groups, was briefing journalists to pre-empt a government report on future water use being published today.

The association claims that reducing mains leakage and attempting to persuade the public to use water more carefully is no longer enough to guarantee freedom from shortages. A new "twin-track approach" is needed, in which water resources are boosted, Severn Trent's managing director, Brian Duckworth, said.

But large new reservoirs and the pipes and pumps needed to service them cost tens of millions of pounds, while the water companies are under strong political pressure to hold down bills to customers which have risen much faster than inflation in the years since privatisation.

"We want to start a debate," a spokesman for the Water Services Association said. "Climate change is something the industry has to take on board, and we need to think long term."

In the meantime the contents of today's government report was publicised by Friends of the Earth and the Labour Party, to whom it had been leaked. It was revealed that ministers were also taking global warming seriously, and want the water companies to reassess supply and demand in a warmer Britain.

The Government has no proposals for radical new measures. But, after several years of drought and restrictions, it says there is a need for "greater dialogue between water compa-

nies and their customers on the balance to be struck between higher security of supply and higher costs".

Household water use has been rising by 1 per cent per year as people become more affluent. In 1961 the average person used 85 litres per day. Today, with more bathing and showering, more use of dishwashers and washing machines and more garden watering, that figure has nearly doubled.

Throughout the Nineties the Government has been in favour of "demand management", which means persuading customers to use less. That is why it has backed the spread of water meters, but it has been criticised for doing little concrete to encourage water efficiency. For example, showers - which use far less water than baths - are not mandatory in new homes.

At the moment much of England has a hidden drought, with water tables in five aquifers dotted around the country at record low levels. Yorkshire Water announced yesterday that all its water restrictions would finally be lifted next month, but there are also bans in parts of Southern and nearly all of North West's areas.

Until this year the companies claimed that they and their customers were the victims of freakishly low rainfall, of the kind that only happened once in 100 years or more. But now they are saying this could be an early sign of man-made climate change. Rainfall has been below average for more than two years.

At the moment, supercomputer simulations of global warming over the next 50 years predict that Britain's total rainfall will increase. But summers across most of England and Wales are forecast to be longer, hotter and drier, sending demand soaring and creating the need for more to be collected and stored in winter.

Health White Paper: GPs, dentists and pharmacists see benefits both for themselves and patients



Muscling in: A physiotherapist, Cheryl Atkins, treating a patient at Manor House in Glossop, Derbyshire, a surgery praised by John Major

Photograph: Phil Noble

Back to the future with cottage hospitals

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Family doctors, dentists, and pharmacists yesterday gave a cautious welcome to the Government's new vision of primary care which gives them greater freedom in the way they practice, promises more choice for patients and better tailoring of services to local need.

In stark contrast to the confrontational approach adopted by his predecessors and eschewing the imposition of new ideas, Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, outlined a quiet revolution in which those "at the sharp end" seize the initiative.

Implementation of the changes in the primary care White Paper, *Choice and Opportunity*, launched yesterday, will only follow if voluntary pilot-schemes and evaluation of the Government's proposals

prove their worth, Mr Dorrell promised.

One of the most dramatic proposals is for a change in GPs' contracts which will speed the growth of "super-surgeries" or cottage hospitals offering a range of healthcare including minor surgery.

Currently all family doctors are independent contractors with the Secretary of State and are obliged to provide specific core services which rules out

flexibility, the White Paper says.

Under new legislation, practice-based contracts would be introduced in which a particular practice rather than a GP contracts with a health authority to provide services for a local population. It will allow nurses, therapists and managers to play a more high profile role and organisations or groups of individuals other than GPs to provide services including, in theory, retailers such as Asda or

Sainsbury's, as revealed in *The Independent* yesterday.

Salaried positions are proposed for GPs employed by a practice, trust or health authority who want to work more regular hours and concentrate on patient care rather than the business of running a practice. This is expected to improve care in inner-city areas which face a severe shortage of GPs.

Another significant development is a single budget for

general medical services, hospital and community health services and prescribing which will, in effect, allow some fund-holding GPs to become "mini-health authorities" providing all services for their patients.

Greater flexibility for dentists in the crisis-ridden NHS dental service is discussed with a range of pilot schemes for health authorities to buy dental services from local practitioners.

A wider role for pharmacists

is endorsed with the creation of incentives for health authorities to buy a wider range of services, including the pharmacy as first stop for the treatment of minor ailments.

The British Medical Association applauded the Government's recognition of the value of primary care. The National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts said the White Paper would mean wider choice and improved value for money.

Peak practice that comes top for service

CHARLIE BAIN

Deep in the heart of the Peak District down a small side road off the main high street in Glossop, Derbyshire, lies Manor House doctor's surgery, the apple of John Major's eye and the super-surgery of the

Conservative future. In his speech to the Tory conference last week, the Prime Minister used Manor House as a prime example of a flourishing fund-holding practice.

"Waiting lists have been slashed," he said. "People no longer have to trek to the district hospital... more money is spent on patients, less money spent on paper work. This practice could be the model for the future."

The holders of last year's Fundholding Practice of the Year award, Manor House is the surgery that offers everything - osteopathy, acupuncture, aromatherapy, counselling and physiotherapy, all carried out by an in-house team.

According to the practice's senior partner, Dr John Oldham, all these services have had

a significant impact on hospital referrals, carried out at less cost.

"We are doing more at the surgery for the individual patients," he said. "Our anticoagulant clinic is one of the most successful services. In the past, patients would have to travel 15 miles to one of the two local hospitals but now they come to the clinic for treatment instead."

"We analysed the cost of this new service and it was at a much-reduced cost to the NHS. The same saving across the whole district would save the

NHS £750,000 a year," Dr Oldham is immensely proud of the practice's achievements, in particular its funding of a local cottage hospital which saw the inauguration of a flourishing "homeward bound unit". The project helps to avoid patients being sent to nursing homes after their hospital care. Now 60 per cent go home and it saves the NHS £0.5m a year.

For the people of Glossop and the surrounding area the emergence of Manor House has been a godsend. Many used to

spend time and money travelling as far as Manchester for treatment.

One patient whose gained significantly is Margaret Gainey, 69, who suffers from asthma and acute bronchitis which caused a blood clot on her lung. A non-fundhold patient, her GP arranged for her to be admitted to the anticoagulant clinic at Manor House to save her the 15-mile trek into Manchester. Mrs Gainey now visits the clinic, just four miles from her home, once a month.

Another patient to benefit is 68-year-old Frances Kane. "We all consider ourselves very fortunate because we never have problems getting an appointment," she said. "Everyone is so nice here, I'm not surprised Mr Major was impressed."

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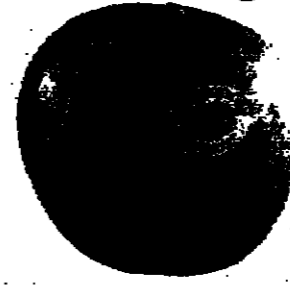
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Banks using customers' cash for arms deals

MICHAEL STREETER

Britain's high-street banks are criticised today in a report that outlines their "despicable" use of customers' money to help finance arms deals with repressive regimes.

The report, prepared by the British-based World Development Movement, is especially critical of Midland Bank for assisting the sale of British Aerospace Hawk trainer jets to the Indonesian government, which has a poor human rights record. It also attacks Lloyds, Barclays and NatWest, as well as Midland, for their role in "boosting Saddam Hussein's military capacity" before the Gulf war, in finance export deals.

Barry Coates, WDM's director, said: "It is despicable that many high-street banks are using our money to finance arms deals to dictators and repressive regimes. Banks must adopt a more ethical policy on arms and invest in a safer future."

The WDM is pressing for a ethical code of conduct applicable to all banks, to reassure customers. Its report, *From High Street to Battlefield: UK Banks and the Arms Trade*, says the end of the Cold War combined with a greater Government push for exports has led to a "new open market for weapons". The increased use of the Government's Export Credit Guarantees Department (ECGD) to underpin sales of weapons has encouraged banks and arms companies because it has effectively removed their financial risk, the report says.

A spokeswoman for Lloyds TSB said the bank would only consider lending if a deal had been approved by the Government, and that they would not knowingly do business with a customer who did not follow arms sales rules - a view echoed by Midland Bank.

Barclays Bank has also said that it only financed manufacturing customers, deals that had to be licensed by the Government. NatWest's policy has been that financing arms deals with "irresponsible" countries is "unacceptable", and that each transaction is treated case by case. The attack on the banks comes as the Cooperative Bank, which is not named in the report, today publishes an "open letter" to its rivals on arms trade financing. The message from managing director Terry Thomas will be that the banks should adopt a common policy on such funding.

In a surprising ruling, a watchdog has rejected complaints about an advertisement for the Cooperative Bank which implied high street banks had used customers' money to finance arms trading, writes *Marianne Macdonald*.

Midland Bank had objected to a national press campaign picturing a landmine, over copy which read: "Between 1981 and 1990, certain banks used hundreds of millions of pounds of their customers' money to finance the supply of arms to both Iran and Iraq."

Shunt stunt: To demonstrate the danger to rail bridges from high vehicles, a bus was driven into one deliberately. The bus lost

They huffed and they bussed, but it still wouldn't fall down

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

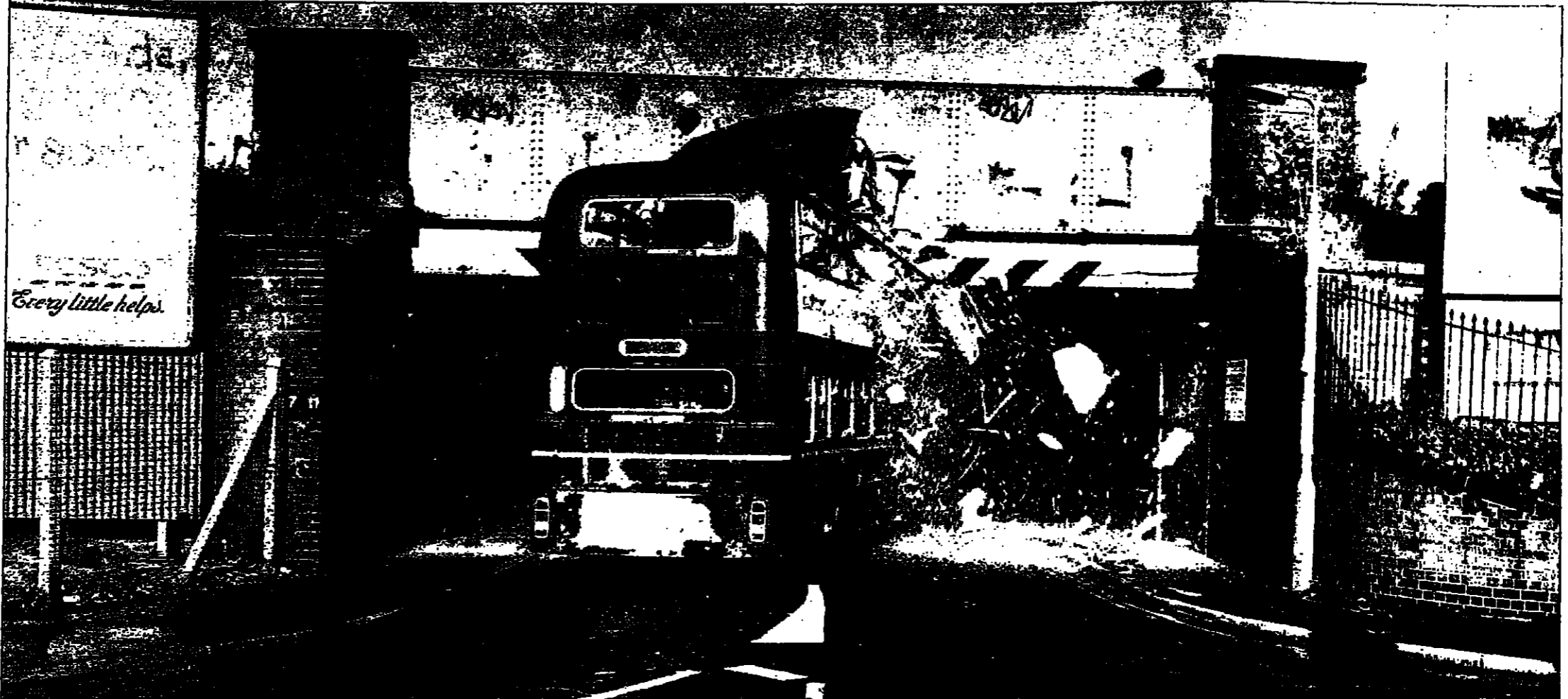
The 25-year-old green double decker had been rescued from a scrapyard. At the wheel was John Carr, a stuntman. He put his foot down and drove straight at the bridge.

He smashed into it at 25mph in a cacophony of broken glass and tearing metal. The bus collapsed, but the bridge didn't.

The demonstration had been staged by Railtrack to illustrate the dangers posed by the increasing number of high vehicles "bashing" into its bridges.

The bridge, in Whitehouse Road, Swindon, had the unenviable record of being the most bashed bridge in Britain with 82 hits since January 1990.

The 83rd seemed to be an attempt to turn the double decker into a single one. Even though we had been expecting the bang, it was a profound shock.



The crunch: The bus was driven by the man who delivers chocolates in a television advertisement. He said the shattering glass looked beautiful

Photograph: John Lawrence

More than half the roof of the bus was removed but the bridge, which carries the Great Western main line, was undamaged apart from the sign reading "3.1m, 10.0" which was soon replaced. The bridge, built in 1910, was quickly passed as safe for the trains.

It is not always so easy. Since British Rail started monitoring bridge strikes in 1990, the number has gone up from 806 to 1,101 last year, 59 per cent due to driver error and a third as a result of poor loading of the vehicle.

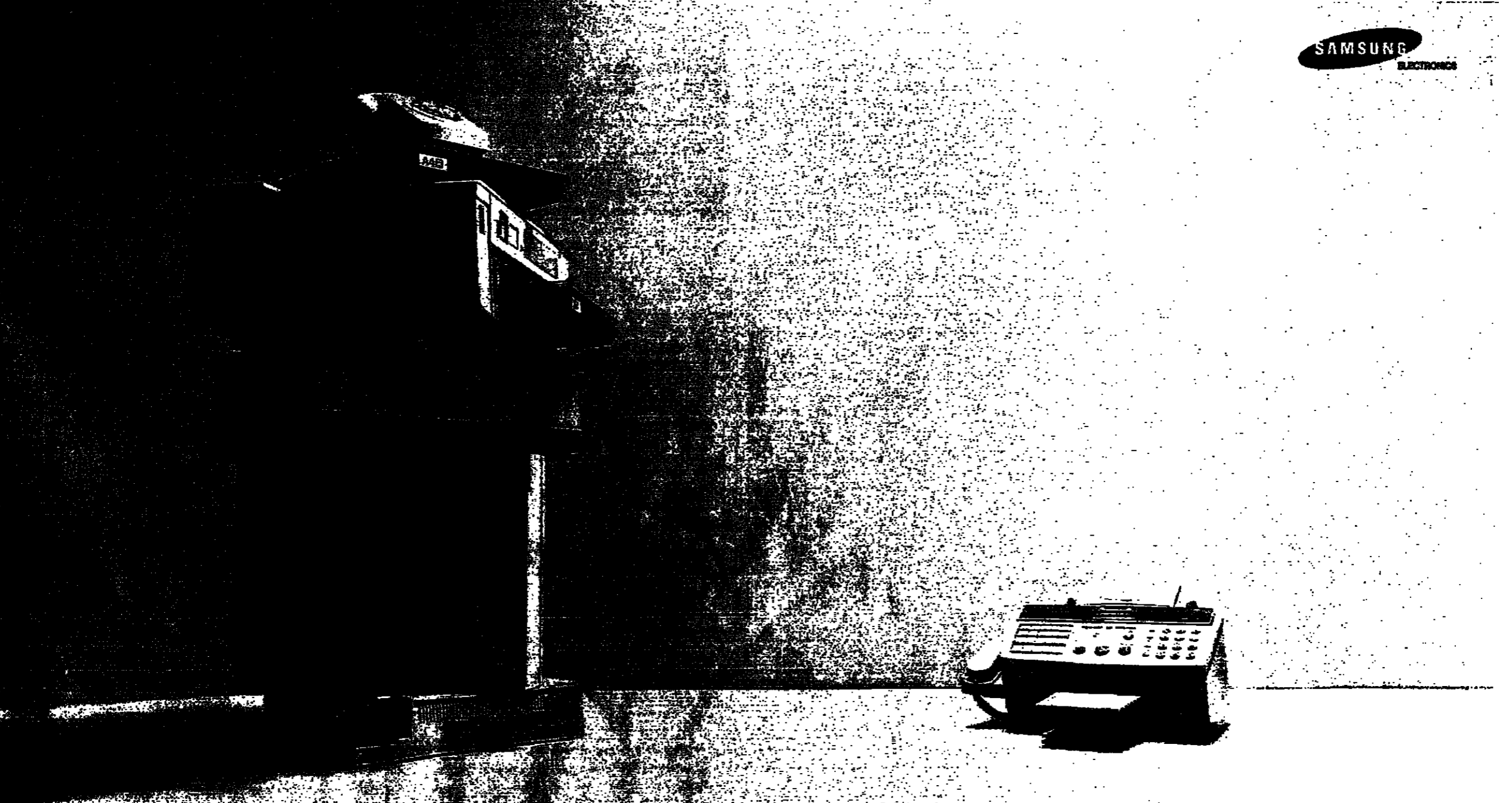
Newly privatised Railtrack, which is now responsible, reckons such strikes cost £5m in repairs and much more in train delays for which it now has to reimburse train operators.

Each time a bridge is hit, an engineer has to check it before trains can use it again, a process which often takes several hours as few people are qualified for the task.

Mr Carr is the man who risked life and limb in the Milk Tray advertisements to ensure that the lady got her chocolates. He emerged looking slightly shaken.

"As the glass shattered, it was so beautiful, it looked like a rainbow," he said. So that's why those thousand or more drivers a year do it.

Britain's most damaged bridges January 1990-June 1996	
1. Whitehouse Road, Swindon - 82 strikes	7. Hawkeneg Road, Westbury, nr Bath - 41
2. Sturtney Road (A142), Ely - 61	8. Station Road (B470), Langley, nr Slough - 39
3. Mill Lane, Bradford - 54	9. Tregoss Moor Road (A30), Roche, nr Bodmin - 37
4. Stoke Road (A5006), Stoke-on-Trent - 47	10. Dingley Road (A427), Market Harborough - 36
5. West Street, Glasgow - 43	
6. Barrowby Road (A52), Grantham - 42	



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IND W/C 14/10

NHS lost £1m on computer agency sale

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

A National Health Service information technology agency was sold too cheaply to a US firm which, in recent months, has been picking up the bulk of government computer contracts, according to an official report out today.

The study by the National Audit Office, the public spending watchdog, found that the South and West Regional Health Authority could have secured better value for the taxpayer when it sold the SWIFT computer division to EDS last year.

The NAO report will fuel the controversy at Westminster about the amount of public sector work being awarded to EDS. Computer contracts from several government departments are now in the hands of the company, once run by maverick US presidential candidate, Ross Perot. Opposition MPs have been pressing for further details of how the firm has

come to dominate the Government's computer market.

In a highly critical report, the NAO said that the health authority put a value on SWIFT's software and hardware but did not pay enough attention to the agency's worth as a business opportunity.

Consultants hired by the NAO put a likely value on SWiFt of £7m to £11m. This compared with the deal agreed with EDS, which saw the US firm pay £800,000 for SWiFt's assets and to provide future discounts to the agency's customers - primarily the health authority - worth £2.3m to £4.3m.

Swift was not properly valued by the health authority. As a result, EDS got a bargain. Under NHS rules, the authority was not required to estimate the possible financial return to EDS from the agency.

The sale was supposed to be competitive, but only four early bids were received and of these, only two submitted an offer.

When EDS emerged as the final bidder, the company was able to negotiate its price down by almost £1m. This was because EDS agreed to take on Swift's pension arrangements, which brought the offer down by £450,000, and problems with the agency's software which

In future, said the NAO, such sales should be conducted on a more realistic, commercial footing. Instead of selling off the individual component parts, the public sector seller should pay closer attention to the likely financial return.

When drawing up short-lists, the government vendor should try and keep as many potential purchasers in the frame as possible and for as long as possible, recommended the NAO.

To avoid problems emerging at the final stage and the last remaining bidder being able to talk down the price, the seller should make all information available to all the bidders, said the report.

Field trailblazes his radical pension plan

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

A blueprint for "thinking the unthinkable" about the welfare state was unveiled yesterday by Frank Field, the Labour MP regarded as a trailblazer for Tony Blair. The plans from Mr Field, chairman of the all-party social security select committee, had been eagerly awaited as evidence of the possible shape of a radical overhaul under Labour.

A representative for Harriet Haman, Labour's social security spokeswoman, welcomed the proposals for "stakeholder pensions", which aim to give people a fund of their own on top of the basic state pension. But the net effect of the plans is remarkably

similar to "old Labour" policies to raise taxes and redistribute resources from rich to poor.

Figures produced by the Government Actuary for Mr Field show that those earning less than about £15,000 a year would gain in their pay packet and in future pension rights, while those above that level would pay more. In all, taxes and compulsory contributions would rise by £3bn a year.

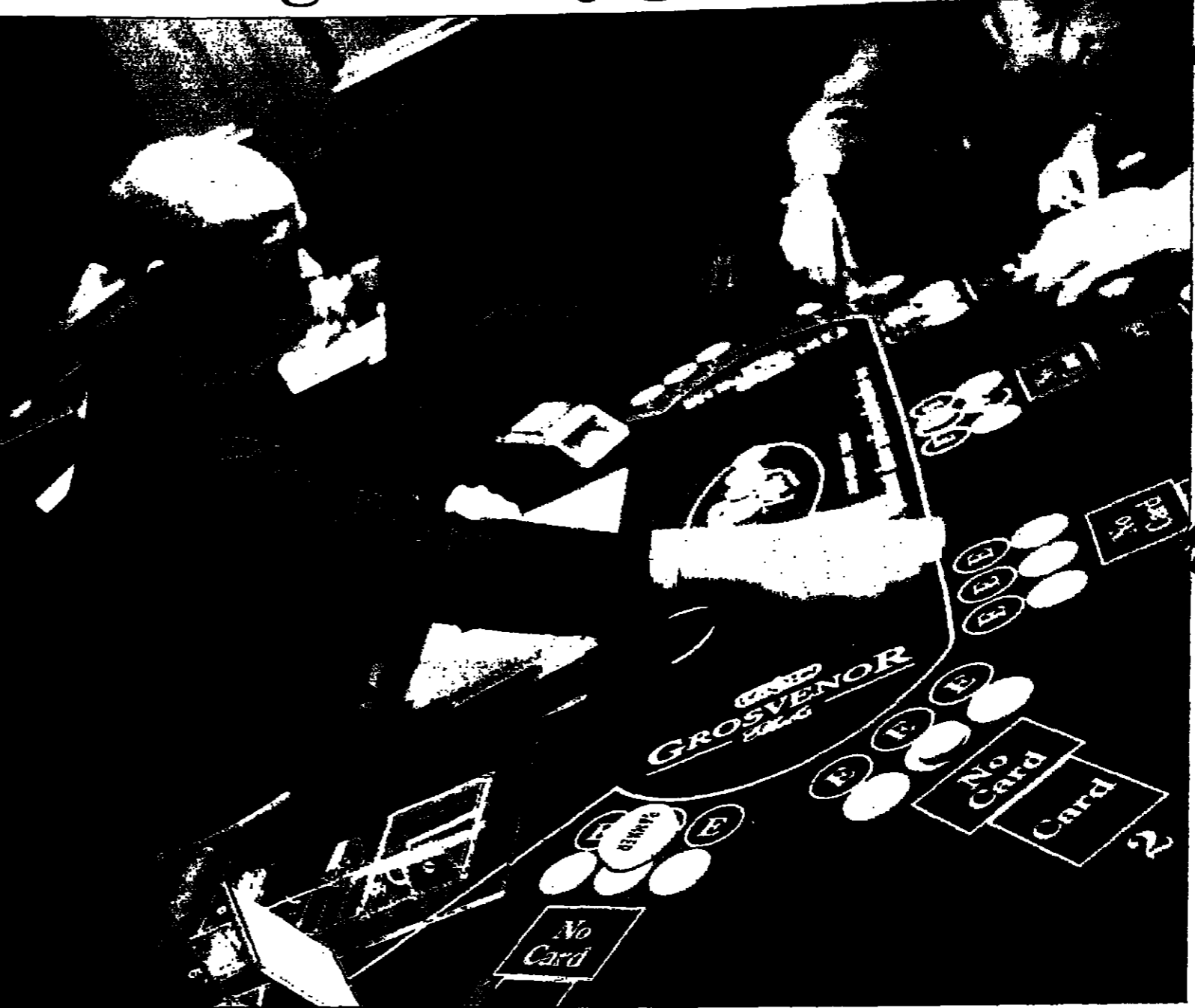
The most striking proposal is to close down the state earnings related pension scheme (Serps); from 2000 all employees would be required to contribute to their own pension. The plans would be funded by a cut in the starting rate of income tax to 5p in the pound, with the standard

rate cut from 24p to 19p, offset by national insurance contributions. In addition, those earning more than £100 a week would make compulsory contributions to a second pension.

The Labour leader is known to admire Mr Field, and to have been disappointed with Chris Smith, who he charged with "thinking the unthinkable" as social security spokesman. But Mr Field's plans are likely to be unacceptable to either Mr Blair or Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, who both thought Labour's plans to increase income tax at the last election were a vote-loser.

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Gambling industry gets lucky at last



Relaxing gameplan: Home Office proposals will allow casino members to buy alcohol, with debit cards, after midnight Photograph: David Rose

JASON BENNETTO,
Crime Correspondent

The deregulation of the gaming sector gets underway

Bingo clubs may be allowed to advertise on television and radio, and betting shops and casinos should soon be able to promote their services in print, the Home Office said yesterday.

The proposals are part of the Government's initiative to deregulate the gaming industry. Under Home Office proposals strict licensing curbs that forbid the serving of alcohol in casinos after midnight are to come to an end. Casinos in England

and Wales will be allowed to sell beers, wines and spirits until 3am in London, and until 2am in the regions.

The 48-hour rule, which prevents anybody playing in a casino until two days after applying for membership, is to be cut to 24 hours. Under the proposals, debit cards will also be allowed in casinos and bingo clubs. The measures are included in a draft Deregulation (Casinos) Order which should

come into play in the New Year if they receive a smooth passage through Parliament.

Timothy Kirkhope, Home Office minister, added: "On bingo and betting shops, I propose to lay a draft order later this year to remove restrictions on print advertising and possibly to allow broadcast advertising of bingo."

Earlier proposals to allow 13 new casinos to be built in England and Wales are to be re-ex-


amined after local authorities from two of the areas earmarked - Croydon in south

London, and Peterborough in Cambridgeshire - raised objections. Additional cities may be added to the original list. The potential sites already mentioned are Dartford and Folkestone in Kent; Gloucester, Hastings in East Sussex, Ipswich in Suffolk, Morecambe in Lancashire, Oxford, Redbridge in Essex, Slough in Berkshire.

Swindon in Wiltshire and Weymouth, Dorset. An announcement is expected in a few weeks.

Mr Kirkhope also announced that additional measures would be considered before being put before Parliament. These proposals would be to allow postal applications for membership group membership, and slot machines in casinos.

The proposals reflect the Government's deregulation policy and follow complaints by the gaming industry that it has been losing a lot of business to the National Lottery.



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Arms agreement frees Stormont logjam

DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

A rare instance of progress in the multi-party talks at Stormont yesterday led participants into their first substantive talks on the issue of arms decommissioning, a move which was hailed as a modest breakthrough.

Although the talks have been underway since 10 June, the participants – the British and Irish governments and nine of Northern Ireland's 10 largest political groupings – had not previously reached agreement on rules and procedure.

The tenth party, Sinn Féin, is not in the talks. Seven of the nine parties signed up overnight to a compromise arrangement aimed at moving the talks on, though in the face of angry dissent from the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists and another unionist party. These denounced David Trimble's Ulster Unionist party for allegedly sidelining the arms issue.

Much of the argument of recent months has centred on the question of when the controversial decommissioning issue should be addressed, with Mr

Paisley and others insisting it should be at the top of the agenda. The arrangement put into operation yesterday meant a debate on decommissioning began after less than an hour spent in discussion of a draft agenda.

The Ulster Unionist party spokesman, Reg Empey, said last night: "We were accused of degrading decommissioning and putting it on the back burner – nothing of the case. The first item was the circulation of draft agendas for the substantive talks. That took a total of 31 minutes, then at 3pm we commenced the decommissioning debate."

One important effect of the new arrangement is that it facilitates the loyalist fringe parties in staying at the table. This is seen as a helpful factor in persuading loyalist paramilitary groups not to end their ceasefire.

The modest movement in the talks has at least had the effect of relieving fears that they would run into the sands by the end of this month without any progress having been made. The formula arrived at seems to assure their continuation for some time to come, although

most participants say that rapid progress is not to be expected.

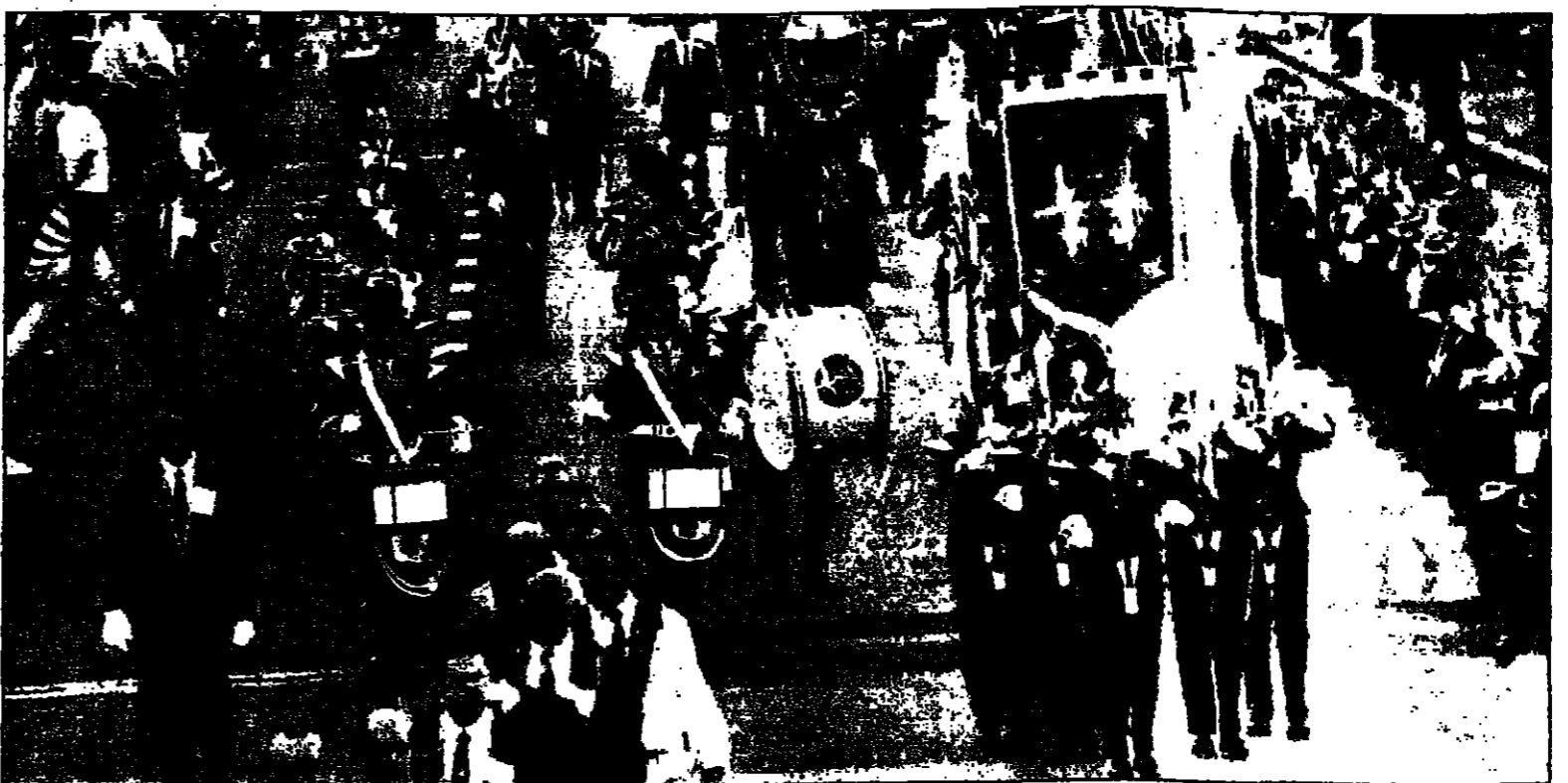
Lord Alderdice, leader of the moderate Alliance party, said: "The progress was very important but one shouldn't overstate what was achieved. What we have now got is an agreement about how we talk about the agenda and how we talk about decommissioning. That's a step forward, but it's not the kind of deadlocking dangerous betrayal that the DUP have suggested, not at all."

He added that he believed this stage of the talks would last for a few weeks.

The Apprentice Boys of Derry, one of the Protestant marching organisations, have applied for permission to walk about Londonderry city's walls this weekend.

In August a crisis was averted when the organisation postponed plans for a similar parade. The Bogside Residents Group yesterday called on the marchers to open talks with local Catholics on the plans. The group said that if they did there was a very strong likelihood of agreement on the issue.

Leading article, page 15



In step: Apprentice Boys at Craigavon Bridge in August. They have applied to parade Londonderry's walls at the weekend. Photograph: Trevor McBride

Agencies supply drunk teachers

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Drunk teachers and those on a Government blacklist are being sent into schools as supply teachers because of the failure to regulate teacher agencies.

A survey of Greater London secondary schools by Margaret Hodge, the Labour MP for Barking, found that three-quarters used private agencies and a third complained about the teachers they were sent. They worried that those recruited by agencies had escaped from full-time teaching because they could not cope or had been sacked. One teacher who was too drunk to teach presented himself in front of a class.

The schools said agencies used teachers who were just babysitters with worksheets, came from abroad and knew nothing about English exams or the national curriculum; were late, racist, or aggressive; or were in the middle of nervous breakdowns. Even when a head sent a teacher back because he was aggressive he was simply sent to another school.

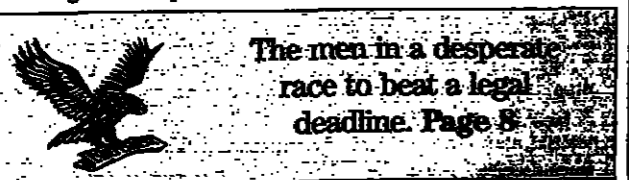
In July, Mrs Hodge told the Commons that a former headmaster on the government blacklist of those barred from teaching turned up in a school

as the director of a Manchester teaching agency, to drum up business. He had been convicted of theft.

Ministers have promised to close a loophole which allows agencies to employ teachers without checks on their background. But Mrs Hodge does not believe the checks will be rigorous enough. "Schools must be able to rely on the agencies to send suitably qualified staff," she said. "The survey proves that some... agencies are failing our children." On average every child is taught by a supply teacher for two classes a week.

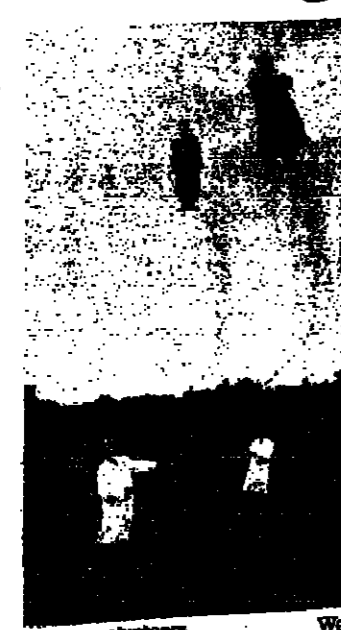
Tish Seabourne, managing director of TimePlan, the biggest agency which sends out 700 supply teachers a day, said she supported Mrs Hodge. "It has become clear that other agencies are not applying the same standards as ourselves. We see our rejects turning up in classrooms... In 1992, we asked the Government to bring in regulations to give the whole industry a new framework."

A Department for Education spokesman said guidance on checking supply teachers had been issued to schools in June. "The vast majority of teachers are checked. New legislation will make it compulsory to carry out checks on all teachers."



Scientists claim breakthrough in zero-gravity sminting

By IAN MODAIRE



Russian volunteers

PHYSICISTS in Cambridge are close to solving the bizarre and baffling phenomenon of zero gravity sminting. A team led by Professor Albert E. Hatt, has been operating with scientists from both the USA and Russia to determine the effects of zero gravity sminting on humming birds.

After being exposed to the effects of a small, blue rectangular pack just once,

the humming birds could achieve a state of complete weightlessness. In other words, they could float. Even more sensational, this experiment has now been carried out on humans; some as heavy as 20 stone.

Leaked photographs taken "somewhere in England" show Russian volunteers floating at least 15 feet in the air and being secured by fishing lines. Professor Hatt explains: "At first, it was a bit tricky with the humans, especially the overweight Russian volunteers."

We had to subject them to continuous sminting before we saw any effect.

But once we got the dose right, we had them floating on air for up to an hour at a time."



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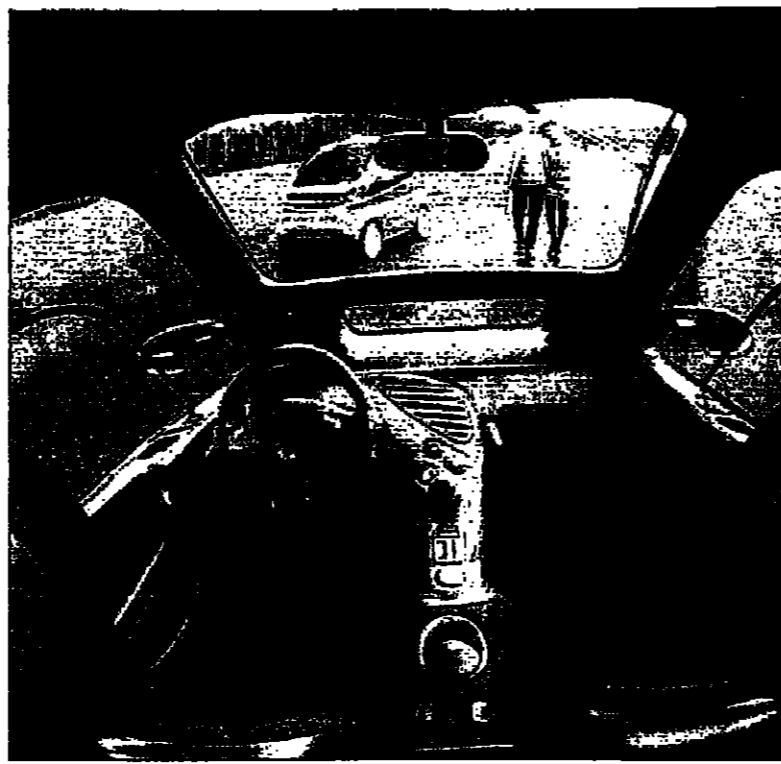
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news

Plug it in, turn it on. Cars that lead the drive to save our cities



Cars of future: The Tulip (left), the prototype French electric car on which the Coventry experiment is based and the Concept 2096, which finds its way home without a driver

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

The biggest ever experiment involving electric cars replacing conventional combustion engine cars is to start in Coventry next month, with 14 Peugeot 106s being operated by five different large organisations.

The experiment, part of a £500,000 project, is designed to test whether electric cars and light vans could be used by a

wide range of organisations to reduce local pollution in towns and cities. It follows a successful two-year experiment in La Rochelle, on the western coast of France with about 40 cars from various companies and which involved members of the public as well as companies. Myles Mackle, who is Coventry council's project officer for the scheme, said: "La Rochelle helped Peugeot to develop the 106 and to test the car in a range

of practical applications. Now we are trying the same thing in a British context."

A future version of the electric car, the Concept 2096, was unveiled at the Motor Show yesterday. Commissioned by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders to celebrate 100 years of the British motor, the car runs on pre-programmed routes, with low emission rates.

The Coventry vehicles, which should all be on the road next

month, are being used by Royal Mail, East Midlands Electricity, PowerGen, Coventry City Council and Peugeot itself. A set of recharging points around the city is being developed to enable vehicles to be refuelled during the day. They will be used as part of these organisations' normal fleet, for routine tasks such as delivering mail and reading meters.

The range of the vehicles is around 60 miles and they have

a top speed of 60mph. When *The Independent* drove one, it was responsive and peppy, belying the sluggish image which has bedevilled electric cars.

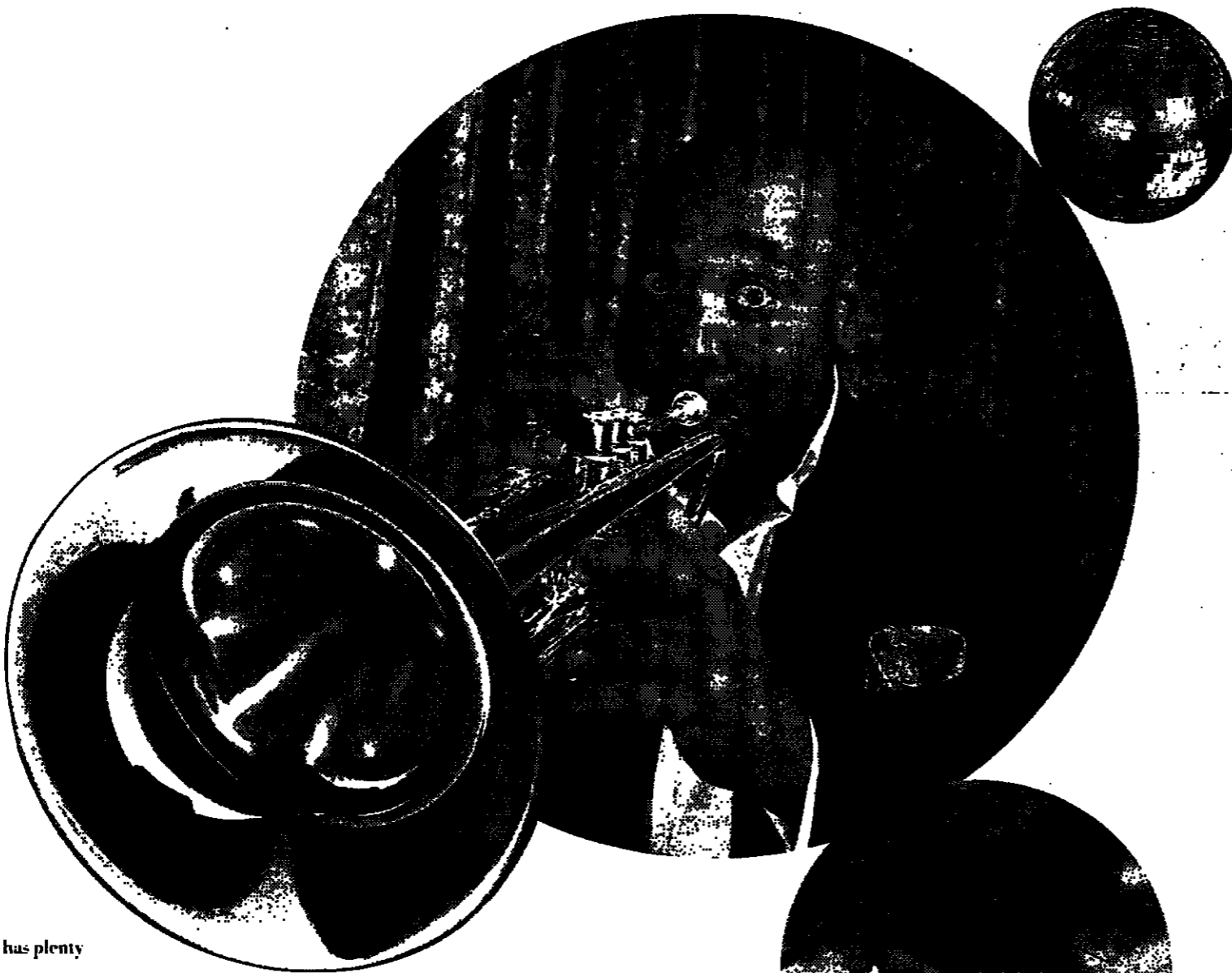
The cars use a nickel-cadmium battery which takes four hours to recharge, last for eight years, and cost £12,000, around double their petrol equivalent. Although in France, the 106 has become the first modern electric passenger car to go into production, sales are still very low

and therefore the cost of parts very is high.

The Coventry 106s are virtually the same as the conventional car, except they have reduced space in the boot to accommodate batteries and are four-seater. A spokesman for Peugeot said: "We believe that for electric cars to be accepted widely, they have to provide the same level of quality, comfort, driving pleasure, style and safety as conventional vehicles."



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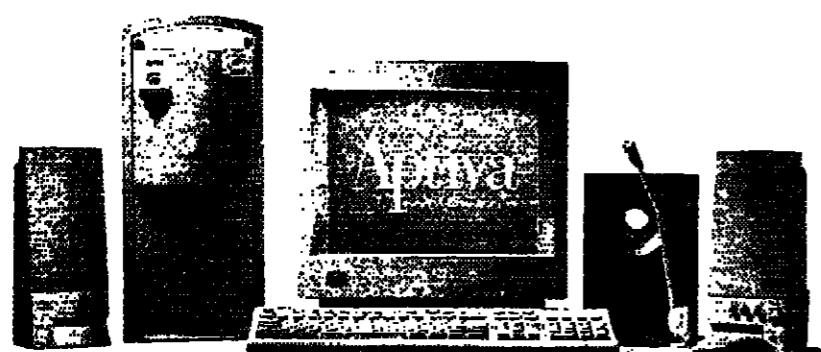
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A19D1610

Foreign firms wheel out £1bn of new money

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

The car industry was boosted yesterday with news of investment by Peugeot, Vauxhall and Rover thought to be worth almost £1bn.

As the Motor Show kicked off at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre it emerged that Peugeot is to build a second model range at its plant at Coventry, securing the future of 2,500 staff and probably creating hundreds more jobs among components suppliers.

Peugeot is notoriously cagey about its investment plans but the board is understood to have decided to expand production significantly at the Ryton plant. The car is thought to be a replacement for the 205, which redefined the small-car market in the 1980s but recently ended a 14-year British sales run.

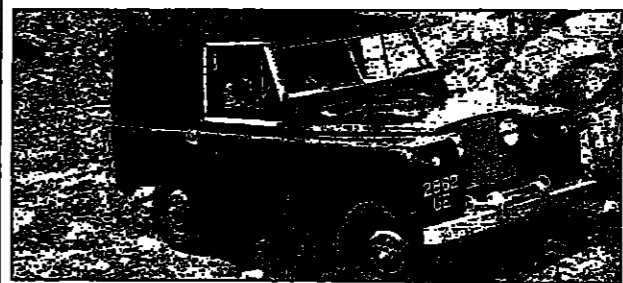
The news is a vote of confidence by Peugeot in Ryton, which currently assembles the 306 Escort-sized car. The workforce has shrunk from 4,300 to 2,600 in five years and the plant's long-term future had been in doubt. The decision will involve a three-year investment

believed to be worth several hundred million pounds. British engineers have already been seconded to France to work on developing the car.

In another sign of the renaissance of the industry, Vauxhall confirmed that it is to spend £300m, its largest single British investment, updating its factory at Ellesmere Port on Merseyside, which has transformed itself over the past 10 years from General Motors' least productive European factory to the lowest-cost manufacturer of the five plants which make the Astra.

The investment, to be backed by a small government grant, will re-equip the site, raising capacity from 145,000 cars a year to 160,000.

Low labour costs and huge productivity strides have made Britain increasingly attractive to GM; 40 per cent of Ellesmere Port's Astras go abroad, whereas hardly any were exported five years ago. Nick Reilly, Vauxhall's chairman, said: "Had we still been a domestic only producer, the amount of the investment would have been nothing like the amount we've just announced."



Trend-setter: New Land Rover will have features from original

Big plans for little new Land Rover

CHRIS GODSMARK

Land Rover is to build a baby-sized four-wheel-drive vehicle and plans to expand production dramatically, the company announced yesterday.

The compact Land Rover, one of the first fruits of BMW's take-over of Rover three years ago, is designed to head off competition from the Japanese in a fast-growing segment of the off-road market. It will share many of the famed abilities of its illustrious predecessors though few of the compacts are likely to do anything more taxing than pottering around town or a little leisurely motorway cruising.

Land Rover refused to reveal what the compact would look like or how much it will cost but the aim is to attract new buyers to the brand when it goes on sale early in 1998.

It is intended that production at the Solihull manufacturing complex should rise from an anticipated 130,000 vehicles this year to 200,000 by the end of the decade. The investment, which will mean security for the 12,000-strong workforce, will come from the £500m-a-year that BMW is committed to pumping into its British subsidiary. "It's definitely a smaller product than the Discovery and we believe there's plenty of scope to get new buyers," Richard Elsy, the project director, said.

Land Rover is thought to have used Toyota's new RAV4 - a chic-looking two-door four-wheel-drive - as its benchmark for the compact. According to Toyota insiders, British engineers bought four of the RAV4s from dealers for development work.

Is this Jag a Cat? The Tabloid

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'If I don't get this settled before I die, my family are going to get nothing'

Gulf war syndrome: Dying veterans plan swift action against MoD to protect their families

IAN BURRELL

Veterans dying from conditions associated with so-called Gulf war syndrome plan quickfire individual legal actions against the Ministry of Defence because they fear they will not survive long enough for a collective action to be brought.

More than 1,000 veterans have registered legal claims against the MoD since the end of the war in 1991.

The collective action may not reach the courts for several years but 26 veterans have already died and dozens more are now critically ill.

Captain Ian Hill, from Manchester, said he would be dead this time next year and that his family might lose possible compensation if he died before getting to court. "I have got to think of my family for when I am dead and gone. If I don't get this settled before I die they are going to get nothing."

Capt Hill, 50, a father of four, is suffering from neurological damage, emphysema and chronic breathing difficulties.

His wife Carol, a registered nurse, has repeatedly had to revive him after he has stopped breathing during the night. "I have to kick-start him by giving him a thump in the chest," she said. "One of these nights, I am not going to be able to do it."

Capt Hill, who is chairman of the National Gulf Veterans and Families Association, was passed 'AI fit' by army doctors when he left for the Gulf in 1990. His responsibility was to set up the operating theatres to treat casualties of war, but he ended up being the first patient when he became sick after the hospital tents were sprayed with organophosphate pesticides (OPs). He was airlifted back to Britain where his condition has steadily deteriorated.

His wife said: "We have come



Gulf casualties: Capt Ian Hill and his wife Carol. Inset: Capt Flynn White, who died last month. Photograph: Martin Rickett

to terms with the fact that this time next year we doubt very much whether he will be alive.

"The collective case and all the tests that are being planned will all be too late. They might help those who have 15 years to live but they won't help those that are dying now. Ian wants to speak while he is still here."

The MoD, which denies the existence of Gulf war syndrome, appeared to soften its position this month with an admission that OPs had been used more than was previously believed.

The Government has now commissioned research into

the protection that was given to those coming into contact with OPs and the likely damage caused by the pesticides.

By the time the results are ready many more veterans may have died.

Captain Flynn White, 31, died last month just 13 days before the MoD announcement. He had been sent to the Gulf within days of graduating from Sandhurst. His mother Angela said: "As far as we know he was in perfect health. I think that whatever it was [that caused his illness] happened in the Gulf because he was certainly

not as well when he came back."

Capt White, who had a wife and young child, was afflicted by a mysterious draining of his energy which he fought against.

His mother said: "He battled hard against what he thought was lethargy and he did enormous amounts of fitness training to get back on track."

However, his efforts in the gym produced no discernible improvement and he began to feel unstable on his feet. He lodged a legal claim with the MoD reporting a long list of symptoms including fatigue, diarrhoea, anxiety and loss of bal-

ance. In April 1994, he was diagnosed by doctors as having a brain tumour.

His mother said she would never know the actual cause of his illness. "His own view was that it was something that happened in the Gulf," she said.

Capt White joins a growing list of Gulf veterans who have died young. Cpl Peter Gowans died from chronic myeloid leukaemia three weeks ago at the age of 29. Cpl Gary Graham, died in May at the age of 31, from a tumour of the spine. Pte Simon Bottrell, 30, died in June last year from lymphoma;



Mark Almond, 27, a senior air-craftsman, died of cancer in November 1992; L/Cpl Robert Robins, 25, died of a suspected brain haemorrhage in February 1991 after phoning home to say his Gulf war inoculations were giving him headaches.

Equality chief berates 'cynical' companies

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

The chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality yesterday revealed years of frustration with the white establishment when he registered his "cynicism" over the high-minded pronouncements of government and business leaders.

Herman Ousley denounced an paper by the CBI on the busi-

ness case for equal opportunities - *A Winning Strategy* - as "yet another initiative in a long line of initiatives". Speaking at the launch of the document at the CBI's central London offices, Mr Ousley also attacked the Government for the ethnic mix on its nationwide "new apprenticeship" scheme. He said that only 2 per cent of the participants in the first year of the scheme were black, which

amounted to a "disgrace". And, after 20 years of equal opportunities legislation, projects and initiatives, more than 62 per cent of black males in London were out of work, he said.

Research by the commission in the north of England and Scotland found that black people invariably encountered prejudice when applying for jobs. Applicants from ethnic minorities were frequently told jobs had

been taken - while white applicants often found the same posts still vacant. The same occurred in accommodation searches. Even supposedly strong supporters of equal opportunities in the private sector had proved unsuccessful. John Moores, director of Littlewoods, had failed to secure an ethnic balance in his pools and mail order business, despite a 30-year aim to do so, Mr Ousley said.

Yesterday, the CBI conceded its own practices were far from perfect. About 58 per cent of CBI employees are women, mostly employed in the lower clerical grades. Just one woman is head of a CBI department.

Only 6.4 per cent of staff are from ethnic minorities; and 0.3 per cent are disabled.

The CRE chairman said that companies such as BA, Ford,

Vauxhall and Mercury - all with progressive policies - had been forced to make "corporate climbdowns" in the past 12 months over their advertising and promotional material.

Kamlesh Bahl, chairwoman of the Equal Opportunities Commission, welcomed the CBI's document, but warned companies that unless they embraced equal opportunities, they were on a "suicidal path".



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WHOSE BOOM?



Revenues from privatisation and oil have disguised Britain's bankruptcy for years. However, if borrowing targets are to be met into the next century, politicians will have to either raise taxes or severely shrink the Welfare State



Empty coffers: Universities demand more but there is little to be had. Britain is bankrupt, according to official figures Photograph: Brian Harris

Broke Britain lives now, but must pay later

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The British Government is bankrupt, according to official figures. Over the years it has cut taxes without holding back its spending, using privatisation revenues and North Sea oil to disguise the fundamental problem.

But, in the short term, Kenneth Clarke is probably going to strike it lucky with the booming economy helping to trim the Government's month-by-month borrowing figures. There is little danger that the state of the public finances will prevent the Chancellor reducing income

tax by a penny or two in next month's Budget.

The short-run improvement will help politicians avoid really difficult questions during the election campaign. Andrew Dilnot, director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which co-produces the annual Green Budget, says: "The real challenge is the long-term balance between public and private sector activity."

He does not think there is a danger of the incoming government having to raise taxes soon after the election, as long as the pace of growth holds up as expected next year. "As long as there is nothing outrageously profligate in this Budget, the Government's fiscal position looks ... reasonable," he said.

According to the Treasury's latest published forecasts, the public-sector borrowing requirement - the gap between public expenditure and tax revenues - will be £26.9bn in the current financial year and £23.1bn next year. This 1997 shortfall would be just low enough for Britain to qualify for the European single currency.

Other economists reckon these forecasts are on the cautious side, the Treasury having been stung by criticism of its earlier overoptimism. Revenues from corporation tax and value-added tax in the year to March turned out to be £3bn lower

than predicted only a few months earlier, perhaps partly because of companies' growing skill at avoidance measures.

Since March, tax revenues have been rolling in thanks to the recovery. The Budget is likely to show future borrowing that is the same or better than the last Treasury forecast, with government finances balancing by the turn of the century.

The big question, however, will be whether this government and the next can deliver on tough spending plans. The existing plans call for little growth in real terms in public spending, with its share of gross domestic product falling from 42 per cent last year to less than 39 per cent in 1998-99.

This requires the public sector to turn on a stopcock and reverse the trend of the past half century. As Mr Dilnot puts it: "I think the Chancellor will announce very tight spending plans. If they are to be hit there will be a great deal of pain in the public sector, with a complete rethinking of public provision. If they are not hit, taxes will have to go up."

The party political jousting next month will focus on the headline cuts in income tax in the 26 November Budget. But the hidden agenda is the shape of government we are willing to pay for in the next century.

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Public sector workers keep fragile peace

DAVID WALKER

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is usually punctuated by the agonised screams of teachers, doctors, civil servants and council employees who have been tipped off about how much less the Government proposes to spend on them during the year to come.

But this autumn the silence is deafening. Despite Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, warning public employees there will be no extra money for pay rises, despite the Government's affirmation that total public spending can rise by only half a per cent next year, the usual parade of "bleeding stumps" is missing.

True, the head of the Prison Service has complained publicly about the gap between the cost of accommodating the rising numbers of prisoners and the finance allocated to jails. University vice-chancellors, too, have been muttering ominously. Unless more is allocated them, especially for capital spending, they have threatened to impose "top-up" fees on students.

But all in all public spending is far less of a problem than might have been predicted. One reason is that just before and after the last election there was a (politically useful) spurge. Between 1991-92 and

1995-96 spending rose by almost 2 per cent a year in real terms. Since then a new system of control through a Cabinet committee chaired by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, seems to have been effective in keeping outlays inside planned totals.

Another reason is that the pay of public employees has largely kept up with the private sector - but the Government has been able to accommodate the increases by gradually whittling away at the total numbers employed, for example through contracting out services.

But how long will this autumn's relative peacefulness persist? The answer depends on how tightly the Government sticks to its ambition of pushing downwards the proportion of national output that moves in and out of government coffers. It wants by the century's end to push this figure down to 38 per cent, from its current level between 42 and 43 per cent (about the same as when the Tories took office in 1979). That will require real pressure.

But a growing proportion of all spending is in health and education where where people seem to want more, not less, spent. Moderate growth in health spending could very easily come to look like cuts.

DAILY POEM

Poem for a Man with No Sense of Smell

By Kate Clanchy

This is simply to inform you:

that the thickest line in the kink of my hand
smells like the feel of an old school desk,
the deep carved names worn sleek with sweat;

that beneath the spray of my expensive scent
my armpits sound a bass note strong
as the boom of a palm on a kettle drum;

that the wet flush of my fear is sharp
as the taste of an iron pipe, midwinter,
on a child's hot tongue, and that sometimes,

in a breeze, the delicate hairs on the nape
of my neck, just where you might bend
your head, might hesitate and brush your lips,

hold a scent frail and precise as a fleet
of tiny origami ships, just setting out to sea.

Kate Clanchy last week won the Forward Prize for Best First Collection for her splendid *Slatters* (Chatto, £6.99). Sharp, pungent and sensual, Clanchy's verse explodes on the palate in a series of intimate, and sometimes wry, vignettes of memory, love and loss. Born in Glasgow in 1965, she was educated in Edinburgh and Oxford and now teaches in the East End of London.

مكتبة من الأصل

Middle East: King's visit underlines Arab unity in demand for Israeli withdrawal from Hebron

Hussein returns in peace to West Bank

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jericho

King Hussein returned to the West Bank yesterday for the first time since the Jordanian army was defeated here by Israel in 1967. He landed by helicopter on the outskirts of Jericho, the autonomous Palestinian enclave, accompanied by Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

The purpose of the meeting in Jericho was to underline Arab solidarity in demanding that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, fulfil the Oslo accords by withdrawing from most of Hebron. "I am happy to be on Palestinian land," said King Hussein at a joint press conference. "We will support our brothers by all means."

Palestinians lining the main road in Jericho, a sleepy town of 20,000 in the Jordan valley which gained autonomy in 1994, looked pleased that King Hussein was among them. Amil Amar, a local doctor, said: "It is better to have friends than enemies on your side. Unfortunately the Americans are always with Israel."

Majid Awali, a photographer specialising in portraits and passport photographs, said: "At least the Arabs are getting united." A number of photographs on the wall of his shop showed young men in Jericho, some in uniform, posing with sub-

machine-guns or pistols. He agreed this could not have happened before the Israelis left in 1994, adding: "Before, people used to fight the Israelis with stones but now Palestinians have 40,000 guns. We feel safer, more confident."

As King Hussein and Mr Arafat drove speedily into town in a motorcade, bystanders said they thought that Mr Netanyahu would, eventually, withdraw from Hebron, but would otherwise concede little to the Palestinians. Ibrahim Balo, a middle-aged pharmacist, said: "Netanyahu will give us nothing on Jerusalem, withdrawal from the West Bank, Israeli settlements, Palestinian refugees or our own state."

Conversations in the streets of Jericho were probably not very different from those taking place inside Mr Arafat's headquarters. At the press conference the Palestinian leader suggested, somewhat maliciously since there is nothing Mr Netanyahu is less likely to accept, that an international force protect the 400 Israeli settlers in Hebron "with the participation of the American army".

In abeyance is the rivalry between Mr Arafat and King Hussein for political control of the West Bank, which Jordan seized in 1948 and annexed in 1951. Although the King formally renounced his rights during the Palestinian intifada



Brothers in arms: King Hussein of Jordan (left) with Yasser Arafat, before their talks at the PLO leader's office in Jericho yesterday. Photograph: Reuters

(uprising), the Palestinian leadership remains suspicious that Israel would like to use him to minimise their authority on the West Bank. For the moment, however, Mr Netanyahu's belligerence has forced the two rivals together.

The Jericho talks threw into

confusion the formal Israeli-Palestinian negotiations which were meant to resume in Tabu in Egypt yesterday. Palestinians say little progress is being made, while Israel says agreement is not far off.

The overall shape of a compromise appears to be emerg-

ing whereby Palestinian police will only carry pistols, not rifles, on the hills overlooking the Israeli settlements and in buffer zones. Hot pursuit by Israeli forces will only happen when accompanied by Palestinian police.

Mr Netanyahu's ability to

string out the withdrawal from Hebron, which he had been doing since he won the election in May, has been reduced by his decision to open the tunnel in Jerusalem which provoked fighting in which 60 Palestinians and 15 Israelis were killed.

Mr Arafat's position was

strengthened. "Palestinians discovered they have a new weapon," Danny Rubenstein, a specialist on the Palestinians, writes. "They can synthesise elements of civil disobedience in intifada style and the use of live weapons by the Palestinian forces."

Court orders retrial of SS killer

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

An Italian appeal court last night annulled the trial of Erich Priebke, the former SS captain involved in the 1944 massacre of Jews and resistance fighters at the Ardeatine Caves, outside Rome, ruling that the original trial judge had been biased from the outset and ordering the proceedings to start again from scratch.

The Court of Cassation accepted evidence by families of the victims that Judge Agostino Quistelli of the Military Court had decided to go easy on Priebke before the case came before him this summer.

In July, Judge Quistelli found Priebke guilty of murder but exonerated him from a jail sentence because his crimes were not grave enough to circumvent the normal statute of limitations.

The Ardeatine Caves massacre, in which 335 men and boys were shot dead in retaliation for a partisan attack on an SS unit, is considered the supreme symbol of Nazi barbarity during the German occupation of Italy, and the verdict against Priebke was condemned by the entire establishment right up to the President.

Because of this, Priebke was never let out of jail, with the excuse that he must stay behind bars pending proceedings to extradite him to Germany. Lawyers for the victims' families unearthed a tape-recording in which Judge Quistelli was heard to call the massacre "an old story" that did not deserve the severe approach most Italians were clamouring for.

The lawyers had presented similar evidence, incriminating both the judge and the prosecution, during the trial but had their petition for a re-trial turned down on that occasion. It is not clear if Priebke will go before the Military Court again or if the case will be transferred to a common-crime tribunal.

Slovenes say they are the ideal recruits for Nato

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

Slovenia's Foreign Minister, Davorin Kracun, predicted yesterday that his country would be among the first group of Central and East European countries to join Nato.

Speaking in London before talks with the Foreign and Defence Secretaries, Malcolm Rifkind and Michael Portillo, Mr Kracun said Slovenia's bid for membership aroused less concern in Russia than the applications of other former Communist countries, because the former Yugoslav republic of 2 million people had never been in Moscow's sphere of influence.

"We expect to be in the first wave of enlarging Nato," he

said. "Slovenia fulfils all the conditions for membership in Nato. Slovenia is a stable democracy, has democratic control of the armed forces, and has no disputes with neighbours that we could describe as security risks." Referring mainly to Russia, he added: "Slovenia is among the candidates for Nato membership that are less irritating for those countries that don't see their future in the Nato framework. Slovenia has never been in the Soviet sphere of interest."

Slovenia, the most prosperous and liberal of the six republics of former Yugoslavia, secured independence in 1991 after a brief but bloody war against the Serbian-led Yugoslav army. The country managed to avoid any involvement in the conflicts in both Croatia and Bosnia, and its chief foreign-policy goals since independence have been to join Nato and the European Union and to integrate itself completely with the West.

Nato is expected to issue invitations for membership next year to a limited number of former Communist countries. The Czech Republic, Hungary,



Poland and Slovakia are widely considered to be the front-runners for inclusion in the alliance, a process that Nato would like to complete in time for its 50th anniversary in April 1999.

Mr Kracun said that, from Nato's point of view, one of the attractions of admitting Slovenia was that it would ensure that the country would not be geographically cut off from the rest of Nato.

"There is a natural connection between northern Italy and Hungary that goes through Slovenia, enabling Nato to have

a link with Hungary on land," he said.

This particular problem would not arise if Slovakia, which links Hungary with the Czech Republic, were considered likely to be in Nato's first wave of enlargement.

However, Slovakia's chances of early Nato membership have dimmed because of doubts among Western governments over the quality of democracy and civil rights under Slovakia's Prime Minister, Vladimir Meciar.

The geographical case for admitting Slovenia appears rather more compelling than the purely military one, since the country's armed forces are only 15,000 strong. Mr Kracun said that Slovenia spent 1.7 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product on defence.

Anti-military sentiment among young Slovenes was one of the main forces propelling Slovenia towards independence in the late 1980s but Mr Kracun pointed out that this feeling was directed against the Serbian-led, Communist army. He noted that Slovenia now provided logistical support for Nato peacekeeping forces in Bosnia.



Who is Cordelia in a wildly chaotic land? Page 12

Advertisement

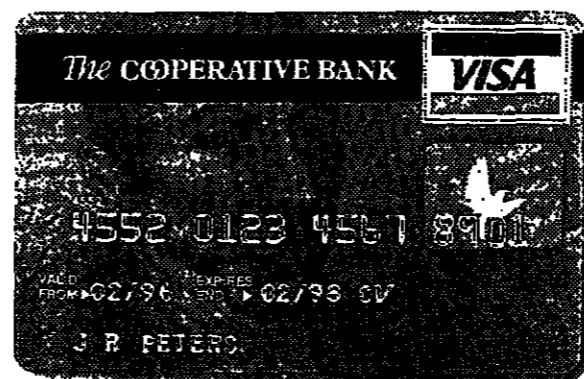
The recently published book, *OpJB*, is an account of how Ian Fleming and Christopher Creighton, the book's author, led an expedition that brought Martin Bormann, Hitler's Secretary, to England at the war's end. The book has been the centre of sensational controversy. Bormann, as the sole executor of Hitler's will played an essential part in the disposal of Nazi assets in Swiss Banks. Bormann's authority to release such assets was the reason the Allies wanted him in England. This is a matter of supreme historical importance. In the interests of truth, a reward is hereby being made of

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international

Father's daughter who holds key to political destiny of Mother Russia

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

One of the sharper analogies used to describe Russia these days is that of "King Lear": an ill and ageing potentate presiding over a wildly chaotic land, while his daughters – or, in this case, his daughter – stealthily assume control.

The comparison is unfair to Tatyana Dyachenko, Mr Yeltsin's youngest child, who, though no Cordelia, has shown no sign of the greedy ambition of the mad king's other two offspring. Yet no list of Russia's most powerful political figures can now be considered complete without her name.

In the three months since her father was re-elected, she has become a key figure in his new administration, quietly working to hold it together in a period of economic and social strife and ferocious political infighting. Some Russians have even begun to see her, rather than the president's wife, Naina, as the first lady of the Kremlin.

Apart from a few brief, edited, television clips, Mr Yeltsin has remained out of sight while he prepares for his heart operation. Although he has held official meetings, fired off decrees, and communicated with a disillusioned country by radio address, he has become an absentee leader, ruling uneasily from his sanatorium. Masterminding this delicate operation day-to-day is his chief-of-staff and erstwhile privatisation guru, Anatoly Chubais. But alongside him works the 36-year-old Tatyana.

"She is the one who influences her father most," complained a former Kremlin insider, Valery Strelets, yesterday in an interview in *Moskovski Komsomolski* news-

paper. "She and Chubais block access to the president. They do not let anyone near him." His remarks were the latest instalment in a complex scandal that has erupted as Russia's ruling clans grapple for power in the president's absence.

For days, allegations of embezzlement, attempted murder, and blackmail have been flying. They centre on the activities of the murky National Sports Foundation, but they are also thought to be part of an elaborate attempt by Mr Chubais (and therefore Tatyana) to discredit his arch-enemy, General Alexander Korzhakov, Mr Yeltsin's former chief bodyguard, who has been accused of trying to extort \$40m. The motive is simple: to undermine the popular Alexander Lebed, an ally of Korzhakov, who wants to be the next president.

And, although almost every detail of the scandal is disputed, no one disagrees with the broad claim that Mr Yeltsin's daughter is an active player in the power game. "She is a link between the president and Mr Chubais," said Viktor Kremenjuk, a political analyst. "The two work very closely together."

Tatyana Dyachenko first became actively involved in politics in February after pointing out to her father that his election campaign was in trouble. He overhauled his team and invited her to join it, which she did, despite having just given birth to her second son – the older one, 15-year-old Boris, is at Millfield in Somerset. Before long she was the chief go-between between the campaign staff and the president.

A mathematician by training, she is quieter and less volatile than her father, but she can be tough and strong-willed. "When she said no to something, be-

cause the president didn't want it, that was it. It meant no. She had a very powerful veto," said Vyacheslav Nikonov, who worked on the campaign.

When there was bad news, she was the only one who knew how to break it to her father. She showed a sharp instinct for presentation – a valuable asset in an election where television proved important. It was she who persuaded Mr Yeltsin's guards to stop wearing sunglasses because they looked too thuggish.

To date, she has remained largely behind the scenes, mindful, perhaps of the unpopularity of Raisa Gorbachev, whose bejewelled presence in the limelight irritated many Russians. But when 17 children were killed when a bus crashed with a train in the southern city of Rostov last month, it was she who flew to the region as the president's representative.

The question now exercising Kremlin watchers is what is her ultimate motive? Does she covet high office, or is she merely a loyal daughter, helping a troubled father? "What she cares about is her father's place in history," said Mr Nikonov. "She has shown no sign of having political ambitions of her own." But it is hard to be so sure. She is, after all, a Yeltsin.

Fresh doubts about Mr Yeltsin's bypass operation arose yesterday with a report that he was suffering from low haemoglobin levels in his blood. The claim was made by Echo Moskvy radio station, which said the problem was such that few surgeons would recommend an operation in the foreseeable future. It was denied by the Kremlin, which said that preparations for the operation were "going according to plan".



Power behind the throne: Tatyana Dyachenko, who was instrumental in reviving her father's faltering election campaign and is now 'the one who influences him most'. Photograph: AP

French news strike greets budget cuts

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

The French government presented its 1997 budget to parliament yesterday – the crucial one that determines whether France will meet the criteria for joining a single European currency by the planned 1999 start. Although a stomach-ache depended on yesterday's figures, however, there was precious little drama of the sort that surrounds Budget day in Britain.

Most of the measures, from the Fr60bn (£7.3) worth of savings to Fr25bn worth of tax cuts were known in advance, thanks to a heavy programme of advance publicity by the government. Even if there had been any shocks, though, they would have gone largely unreported. The majority of the strongly unionised journalists were on strike for the day in protest against a clause of the tax package that would phase out special allowances for professional groups, including themselves.

Television news programmes were emasculated, the state monopoly news agency, Agence France Presse, produced a bare diet of foreign news, and the 24-hour news radio station played music. Few, if any, of today's newspapers are likely to appear.

The government's advance presentation had been designed to limit public resistance to inevitable spending cuts. Reports in early summer of the tens of thousands of jobs that would have to be cut in the public sector were attenuated by early autumn to 5,600, a figure confirmed yesterday. The prime minister, Alain Juppé, went on television six weeks ago to "sell" the start of a five-year "tax-reduction programme". The response was widespread cynicism, but the government pressed on.

Introducing the budget bill yesterday, Jean Arthuis, the Economy Minister, and the Budget Minister, Alain Lamassoure, stressed the efforts being made

to reduce the budget deficit to the Maastricht-required 3 per cent of gross domestic product, the "better targeting" of aid for jobs (actually taking a severe cut), and the levels of spending being maintained. They said that the biggest savings would come from lower debt repayments (because of lower interest rates) and from the next year's net zero contribution to the European Union budget because of "good management".

The budget, Mr Arthuis said, "goes as far as is possible without jeopardising social cohesion". Some modest tax cuts are planned for next year, at the extremes of the tax system, but the plight of the journalists illustrates the difficulties of reforming France's outdated and complex tax system.

Under a measure introduced in 1934 to help impecunious freelancers, journalists were awarded a 30 per cent tax exemption that has persisted ever since. Although the benefit has acquired a ceiling of Fr30,000, the beneficiaries now treat the concession as a right.

Madrid — Hundreds of thousands of Spanish trade unionists held a nationwide day of protest against government austerity measures yesterday, in the first big mobilisation since the conservative Popular Party came to power last March.

The day of action was launched by students, teachers and parents in a midday demonstration outside the Education Ministry in Madrid against what unions called "a savage attack by the government on public education". Yesterday evening 2 million public-sector workers took to the streets throughout Spain in opposition to a pay freeze for public employees. The government insists the measures are necessary to make Spain ready for a single European currency in 1999. Union bosses meet tomorrow to decide on further action, which could include a general strike.

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Dole may go for the jugular in California

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Bob Dole is warming up for today's vital San Diego debate with Bill Clinton with what aides said would be his most biting attack yet on the ethics record of the President and his administration amid strong signs that he will after all make California the centrepiece of his struggling bid for the White House.

Under mounting pressure from his political advisers to strike hard and even low if necessary, Mr Dole has daily been edging closer to a frontal assault on the character issue. The menu, moreover, is certainly rich - ranging from the dispute over improper White House access to FBI personnel files to Mr Clinton's apparent refusal to rule out presidential pardons for associates convicted in the Whitewater affair, and now the controversy over campaign contributions to the Democrats from Indonesian business figures.

A speech yesterday in San Diego was set to be a foretaste of what Mr Clinton could expect in the "town-hall" debate at the city's university tonight.

If the candidate is now to take off the gloves, then the reaction of most Republican activists is "and about time too".

With only three weeks left before voting day, and a daunting lead to overcome, party strategists are dismayed how in the two previous debates neither Mr Dole nor his running-mate, Jack Kemp, have taken opportunities served up on a platter to go after Mr Clinton on the terrain where they believe he is most vulnerable.

But whether the new strategy will work is another matter. Mr Dole is a prisoner of his own image and gen-



High hopes: Bob Dole with his campaign plane in Kansas City before he set off for California and the debate with Bill Clinton

Photograph: Jim Bourg/Reuters

eration. Try as he might to appear otherwise, he continues to come across as a loveable but slightly curmudgeonly grandfather padding around the country in carpet slippers.

He appears decent and upright to

be sure, compared to the slippery Mr Clinton, but somehow Mr Dole is a man who is living more in the past than the future.

The risk is, as every political commentator is quick to point out, that if he does go negative, Mr Dole

may further disenchant the voters who have long since signalled that they are fed up with mud-slinging.

The tactics too can only rekindle the image of the "mean" Bob Dole of elections past, the joyless hatchet-man who fell to unlament-

ed defeat in his two previous White House bids in 1980 and 1988.

But with desperation creeping into their calculations, the campaign seems to have concluded there is nothing to lose.

So too have the American media,

hardly less desperate to inject some excitement and controversy into a contest whose dynamics have not changed a whit since early summer.

With public interest thus far minimal - audiences for the two televised debates thus far down by 40

per cent on their 1992 counterparts - scarcely a day passes without a spate of front-page headlines wondering when Mr Dole will raise the ethics question. Indeed, the "E-word" has now supplanted the liberal "L-word" for pride of place in American political jargon.

But "going ethical" is not the only quandary facing the Dole campaign as it scrambles to decide how best to use the candidate's money and time in the 20 days remaining until 5 November.

The word now is that despite opposition from some advisers, California will be a top priority target, even if that means devoting less attention to traditionally pivotal industrial and Midwestern states such as New Jersey, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

But the logic is clear. No Republican has won the presidency without carrying California, whose 54 electoral-college votes alone are a fifth of the 270 needed for victory. A month ago, Mr Dole's task seemed impossible.

But the campaign is taking fresh heart from an opinion poll by the respected Field organisation showing Mr Clinton's lead in the state has come down from an unassailable 20 point or more to just 10 - smaller than the President's advantage nation-wide.

Another factor has been intense pressure from Republicans on Capitol Hill, led by Newt Gingrich, not to abandon California.

Deprived of a strong top-of-the-ticket presence in the state, Mr Gingrich fears the party could lose several of its 27 Congressional seats next month, imperilling both the Republicans' current slim majority in the House of Representatives and his own tenure as Speaker.

China warns Hong Kong over escaped dissidents

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong

Peking has accused the United States and Hong Kong governments of encouraging dissidents to flee China after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, in which several hundred pro-democracy demonstrators died.

Shen Guofang, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, yesterday confirmed that the leading dissident Wang Xizhe had slipped out of China into Hong

Kong. He is now believed to be in San Francisco. China usually turns a blind eye to the escape of dissidents, being reluctant to highlight their departure and often glad to be rid of them. But Mr Shen's remarks suggest a change of attitude which, he hinted, was prompted by Hong Kong's reversion to Chinese rule next year.

It is clear that the British colony's traditional role as a centre for asylum seekers will end next July, Mr Shen said: "I am sure Hong Kong will become an

international financial, economic and trade centre. It will not be a centre for other things".

Tung Chi-wah, the leading contender for the post of Chief Executive of the new Hong Kong government under Chinese sovereignty, yesterday made a rare statement on policy, saying he was sure the territory would forge an extradition agreement with China, and if he were Chief Executive, he would "act according to the law", meaning that political fugitives would be handed over.

The colony has, historically, given refuge to some of Asia's leading revolutionaries, including Sun Yat Sen, who founded the Chinese republic, and Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Vietnamese revolution.

Referring to those who have given shelter to Chinese dissidents, Mr Shen said: "We hope the countries concerned will not have the slightest ambiguity in cracking down on illegal and secret immigration". He accused Mr Wang and his "plotters" of "illegally and secretly crossing

the border". Mr Wang is one of the last internationally known dissidents to be either at liberty or still in China. He was first jailed in 1974 after putting up a wall poster in Guangzhou, southern China, which protested at repression in the last years of Mao Tse-tung's rule. He was re-arrested in 1981 on charges of spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda and forming an opposition group. According to Robin Munro, of the US-based Human Rights Watch Asia, China has effectively

snuffed out dissident activity in recent years, leaving only a handful of active opposition leaders. Wang Dan, one of the best-known former student activists from the Tiananmen protests, is likely to go on trial again this week. He is charged with the capital offence of subversion.

Because there are so few active Chinese dissidents at large it seems strange the government should suddenly raise the spectre of an international plot to aid those trying to escape.

It is estimated that up to 800 dissidents have been smuggled out since 1989, mostly by the Hong Kong-based Operation Yellow Bird underground railway, whose existence is well known to China.

Only once, in 1990, did the government kick up a fuss about asylum seekers fleeing to Hong Kong. This was when the swimming champion Yan Yan refused to leave the colony when returning from an international competition. China demanded that Britain hand him

over and threatened reprisals if he failed to return. He was, however, allowed to go to Taiwan.



Where the centuries have been peeled back. Page 14

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Cradle of Spanish theatre restored



Miguel de Cervantes: Spain's greatest writer, born in Alcalá de Henares, site of Europe's first popular open-air theatre

ELIZABETH NASH
Alcalá de Henares

Two inquisitive drama students stepped into a crumbling former cinema in a town just outside Madrid and after years of painstaking labour, uncovered Europe's first popular open-air commercial theatre, dating from 1601.

Unlike its equivalent, Shakespeare's Globe in London, which had to be rebuilt from scratch, the Cervantes Theatre at Alcalá de Henares, whose 15-year restoration is nearing completion, was revealed by peeling away layer upon layer of accumulated theatrical history.

The discovery, in the home town of Spain's greatest writer, Miguel de Cervantes, has left Globe enthusiasts breathless with admiration: "It is a remarkable treasure of which we are deeply envious," said the director of education at the Globe, Patrick Spottiswoode, following a visit to the theatre at Alcalá earlier this month. The Globe's chief academic adviser, Andrew Gurr, hailed the Spanish discovery as "the most tan-

gible representation of the history of European theatre that there is."

Miguel Angel Coso, now a director of the Cervantes Theatre, said he had no idea what he would find when he and Juan Sanz first peeped into the darkened building in the spring of 1980, then being used as a warehouse. "Our first discovery was evidence of a Romantic theatre built in 1831 with a rare elliptical auditorium. But then we began to think that beneath this lay a much earlier *corral de comedias*, an open-air theatre built in the patio of the surrounding houses."

Historical allusions to such a theatre beside the town's ancient marketplace, now Cervantes Square, set the two students on a 16-year quest whose success owes much to Spain's centuries-long devotion to paperwork. "We found a document showing that a carpenter, Francisco Sanchez, obtained the town hall's permission in 1601 to build an open-air theatre on this site and that he paid a tax to ensure his

theatre in town. He wanted to make money from it," Mr Coso explains, as he steps carefully amid scaffolding and 17th-century timbers.

The theatre remained in use for some 370 years, although the local authorities closed it from time to time over the centuries because of plague, in deference to the death of a king, or following complaints from the university that students were spending too much time at plays and stirring their studies.

Documents record complaints of rowdy behaviour, shouting and brawling during performances and, in 1767, the unruly hurling of "oranges, sweets, apples, chestnuts and other things." Leather wine-bottles had to be banned, and smoking allowed only in corridors. Sometimes the army had to intervene to restore order.

Excavation beneath accumulated rubble and later additions confirmed the original patio had a cobbles floor for the groundlings, a separate balcony area for women, tiered lateral benches for men and private boxes for the well-to-do,

two of which remain. A few private boxes were accessible only from the neighbouring houses – the owners agreeing to trade their loss of use of the patio for what amounted to a gratis subscription to every performance.

Architects also uncovered an ancient well, to the amusement of one of Alcalá's local officials who on a recent visit recalled that no one liked sitting in that corner of the old cinema because it was always so chilly and damp.

"The minute I stepped inside, I could smell and hear the ghosts of people who had been there and played there. It's warm with layers of theatrical history," said Mr Spottiswoode yesterday.

Rich written evidence of construction contracts, actors' lives and theatre procedures uncovered by Mr Coso and Mr Sanz provided a priceless bonus, according to Professor Gurr. "We have so few documents and so much argument about them. They have done a superb job of retrieving the essentials of the original building with absolute fidelity."



Suharto's symbolism: The statue of 'Christ the King' unveiled by the President yesterday Photograph: AP

Suharto meets East Timor Nobel winner

ALI KOTARUMALOS
Associated Press Writer

Dili – President Suharto of Indonesia met East Timor's Nobel prize-winning bishop yesterday and defended his rule in the territory but never mentioned the 21-year fight to crush its independence movement.

The President, visiting East Timor to inaugurate a giant statue of Jesus Christ as a gesture of religious tolerance, shook hands with Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo and took a helicopter ride with him. But the bishop said later that the two men spoke little and the president did not mention the Nobel Peace Prize that he shared last Friday with the resistance leader Jose Ramos Horta for their opposition to Indonesia's domination of the former Portuguese colony.

Indonesia annexed East Timor in 1976. As many as 260,000 people were killed by military action, disease or starvation in the first five years of Indonesian

rule. Human rights groups say Indonesian troops have tortured, beaten and killed civilians in attempts to stifle separatist aspirations.

President Suharto, who ordered the 1975 invasion, was driven from the airport through streets cleared by security forces. In a speech outside the governor's office, he emphasized his government's achievements in building roads and schools and raising incomes in East Timor.

He struck a drum three times and signed plaques to inaugurate the 56ft black marble statue, a road, three bridges and a street named after his wife, Ibu Tien. "The construction of this statue shows that after East Timor became part of Indonesia, values that are religious and sacred continue to grow and expand," he said.

Mr Ramos Horta called the statue "a joke in poor taste". The visit was a stunt to signal Indonesian sovereignty, he said in Sydney, Australia.

significant shorts

Haider lays claim to the people's vote

A triumphant Jörg Haider yesterday claimed his far right Freedom Party was now a serious contender for power in Austria. Winning the party's 27.6 per cent vote in the elections to the European parliament, Mr Haider said years spent trying to demonise him had failed and that his openly xenophobic party represented the genuine voice of the people. *Adrian Bridge*

Radiation fear in Belarus

Scientists have protested against plans to allow the Belarus military to destroy villages contaminated in 1986 by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster. Radiologists said the military would cause fires and explosions, raising radiation levels 1,000 times above normal and spreading radioactive dust up to 25 miles away. The plan to have the military fire on the homes with tanks and raze the villages was broached by President Alexander Lukashenko. *AP*

Dinosaur steps take a walk

The world's only known set of fossilised Stegosaurus footprints, left by a dinosaur about 130 million years ago, have been stolen from sacred aboriginal land north of Broome in Western Australia. The Kimberley Land Council said the theft was discovered last week and power tools must have been used to remove the prints. "The footprints have great spiritual significance for our people," Joseph Roe, the custodian of the site, said. *AP*

Showdown for communists on "sweeteners"

The head of the French Communist Party, Robert Hue, and his predecessor, the unapologetic Stalinist, Georges Marchais, are to be questioned in connection with a long-running corruption scandal related to party funding. The case centres on allegations that a company linked to the Communist Party accepted "sweeteners" totalling Fr13bn from the giant Compagnie Generale des Eaux, which received building contracts by return. *Mary Dejevsky Paris*

Muslim women on the move

The Saudi monarch King Fahd wishes to increase job opportunities for women. The country is trying to reduce its reliance on expatriate workers, who account for about a third of the 17 million inhabitants. Saudi women are banned from jobs that may bring them into contact with men who are not close relatives. *AP Jeddah*

Cologne's peace wall demolished

Germany's best-known pacifist monument, the "Wailing Wall" of Cologne, was demolished on Monday. The cardboard bricks, bearing messages denouncing violence, sprung up during the Gulf war, and was a focus for resistance to German participation in a Bosnian peace-keeping force. *Isare Karas*

Baby Madonna

The pop singer Madonna, 38, yesterday gave birth to a girl, Lourdes Maria Cecile Leon, was born at Goud Samaritan Hospital. *John Lytle, page 16*

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essay

The biggest mother of them all

Once a virgin, now a parent for the very first time. John Lyttle is in awe of Madonna's shrewd career move

While we're all waiting for the inevitable *In Labour with Madonna: The Obstetrician's Cut*, and day-old, six-pound Lourdes Maria – really, what's wrong with Janet? Or Beryl? Surely even Sally would be better than plain Silly? – is learning to breast-feed through a conical nursing bra, let us take one day out of life, get into the groove and put our love to the test.

Let us consider how the one natural act of Ms Ciccone's recent career may affect her future as a singer, actress, multimedia role model and consenting adult who enjoys miming masturbation on stage to the perennially inappropriate tune of "Like a Virgin".

What can I say? Motherhood may not be as sassy a career move as losing your virginity or proclaiming yourself a Material Girl/Marilyn's successor or publishing a bound, and occasionally gagged, photo-book of yourself in various suggestive poses (what was she doing with that depressed-looking German shepherd dog?) tellingly and redundantly entitled *Sex*.

But, as *Sex* proved – see your local porn shop's remainder bin – there's only so far a girl can go before wet dreams dry up and what once may have looked like artistic obsession (yeah, right) begins to resemble sheer monomania. Rather

Momomania, the role untried, than defining yourself solely through blunt sexuality.

That was always sure to be a dead end – as Madonna, a dedicated raider of gay culture, should have realised – and, let's tell the truth and shame Beelzebub, there does come a past-your-prime-time when you're no longer a hot young thing fearlessly exposing Western civilisation's hypocritical mores. No, you're actually something perilously close to a Dirty Old Woman, who needs to be told, in a caring, sharing way, to start acting her age, not her shoe size (slingbacks with a stiletto heel, size five).

The brave people who lived to tell Madonna were, of course, the public. A few sampled beats ahead of the critics, the canny, many-headed monster realised that the Empress of Reinvention was running out of new clothes – scanties, to be specific – and that, indeed, Madonna might be less the Mistress of the Multiple Image and more a Variation on a Theme (see also Prince, the royal personage we'd most like to see abdicate). Which maybe wouldn't have mattered much if the explicit object of desire hadn't suddenly gone from gung-ho to po-faced: from *Causing a Commotion* to *Express Yourself*.

Previously she had made pop culture seem like a game – scamming Pepsi with the 'blasphemous' transmission of her

product-linked *Like a Prayer* video had both the avant garde and hoi polloi shrieking at her rouged cheek – but in the hall of mirrors that once reflected her ever-changing moods, the role as self-appointed ambassador of the liberated libido was increasingly hogging the frame.

Out went any old irony, in flew High Art – the product, one direly imagines, of too many evenings spent in New York's SoHo, hanging out with independent film directors watching obscure German silent movies. *Sex* bombed, the sales for the accompanying album, *Erotica*, were, in industry parlance, "below expectations" – never be a sex goddess with a slipped disc (not when you've just signed a \$100m

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– and the movie *Evidence* – instinct again, Madonna's persona as the all-too-possible murder weapon – was washed off screens everywhere when the man who would be Madonna announced tentatively, not fully, "That's what I do, I fuck."

Some said it was patriarchal society's revenge on a dangerous feminist icon. Others simply suggested that the Madonna was losing the plot, unsure of her next step. Whatever, she was burning off her original wannabe base. Turned out not many wannabes really wanted to grow up and break middle-aged milks with their private parts. Not if they were going to get these sort of reviews.

"I'm not sorry," Maddie sang on her next album, *Bedtime Stories*. "It's human nature."

Well, no one was buying that particular bedtime story, or that particular song, a rubber fetishist's dream that seemed a tired imitation of genuine impulses after the trashy shock sensations of *Erotica* and *Justify My Love*: call it groaning through the motions. For with the backlash came a wave of He Hurts Me ballads, very victim, very MOR, very safe and snug, almost... traditional, it being the ageing chanteuse's duty to display her scars and suffering, the hard-won medals of emotional experience.

Long in advance of the pregnancy, the Mumming of Madonna had begun – much more (middle) classy, much more middlebrow: this beast would see off sundry rivals, take a pay cut, and humbly audition to be in an Andrew Lloyd Webber musical. Do/don't cry for her... *Take a Bow* pointed the way ("You deserve a reward for the role that you played") putting her back at No 1 in America. Before long she was telling the next guy "You'll See... it takes more strength to cry, admit defeat", before covering "Love Don't Live Here Anymore" ("You abandoned me"). In between, Daddy and a violent boyfriend took turns snacking her around in the video for "Oh Father". As penance, we'd it wasn't quite up to Jody Foster standards – she had to be raped on screen before America felt moved to clear her of any taint in William Hinkley's attempted assassination of President Reagan – but it certainly made the next stage easier, Madonna, diva.

Madonna as diva is destiny. Destiny cannot be fought, one quarrelled with. Turns out the what she said when she first met Barbra Streisand – "I want to be you" – was an honest declaration of ambition. Those tortured, torchy songs signal by

bye to bare breasts and mock documentary footage of on-sex performed on a miner's water bottle. The tramp, it turns out, is a lady. Which is why the parts of mother and Evita ("Both projects are my babies," says the smart blonde) are the right roles at a pivotal moment. The first, like it or not, carries (nominally) clear cultural messages: motherhood is not only maturity – a farewell to any lingering odour of childhood, and hello to a child – it allows vulnerability as well as strength. Madonna knows her P's and cues: "I'm not interested in being Wonder Woman in the delivery room. Give me drugs." Just because it's true doesn't mean it isn't also a PR release: a flagship statement from the new, emotional, damped Madonna, still upset over Sean Penn ("You abandoned me") and aghast at unfaltering maternity wear. It's all a fiery cry from bondage corsets and leather whips.

But she says it with a thistle, not ire, in her voice, having finally learnt from Evita the fine art of the politic. The merger is smooth, even to the trained or jaundiced eye. As Madonna says, "This is the woman I was born to play", one self-invented machine perfectly understanding the other. In this month's *Jagge* and *Vanity Fair* photo shoots carry a smoother, sleeker, older star, supposedly in character as Evita – but it's the notion that tells the truth, not more, it is a declaration of intent. There's a stately aul, a determined divorce from what once was in favour of what is. That could be about Evita's history, or about her impersonator's. Only Madonna's isn't impersonating. At the beginning of her career she was perfectly herself in *Desperately Seeking Susan*. In *Evita* she came home true.

Which could be cause for celebration or dismay. Either way, Mum's the word.

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The quintessential guide to vogueish words



Miles Kingston

Have you noticed the way certain words swim in and out of fashion? The way a word which hasn't been used commonly for hundreds of years will suddenly emerge blinking into the spotlight, have its short season of celebrity and then get kicked out of the stage door into the alley behind and back into the dictionary?

The word eponymous, for example. By itself it isn't a very useful word. The number of times you want to refer to something which is named after somebody are

less than legion. Yes, we all know by now that a boycott is an eponym, as are guillotine and macintosh and volt and... well, lots of others, because they are all named after their originator, but it is very rare that we actually wish to refer to the process of something being or becoming eponymous.

And yet often in the past few years I have heard people using the word, as in "Do you remember the film of *Tom Jones*, with Albert Finney playing the eponymous hero?" Actually, what they really mean is the "title role", as it is stretching the meaning of "eponymous" slightly to extend it to cases when a book or film is named after the hero. But "eponymous" sounds a lot cleverer than "title role" and that is one of the main reasons why words do have a celebrity season before vanishing. They have got vocabulary cred. They sound grander than they really are. They cut a dash. They are a fashion accessory.

That is why you quite often hear people these days use the word "solipsism" or its adjective, "solipsistic".

Now, solipsism is quite a serious word, and was always used by philosophers to refer to the theory of knowledge which says that the individual cannot really know anything outside its own range of needs, or, as the Collins Concise Dictionary snappily puts it, "The extreme form of scepticism which denies the possibility of any knowledge other than of one's own existence".

But when you hear people on *Start The Week* or possibly *The Late Review* using the word "solipsistic", they are not referring to the extreme form of scepticism which denies the possibility of etc etc. They are using the word as a smart-sounding synonym for "blinkered" or "extremely selfish". Extreme selfishness has become a recognised way of life over the years, giving rise to such passing phrases as "I'm all right, Jack" and "the me generation", which Jonathon Green dates to the early 1970s in his seminal work *New Words*. But there has always been needed a trendy word to make selfishness seem more interesting than it is, and finally "solipsism"

has been chosen for the role. Well done, solipsism! You wear the crown previously worn by narcissism, egotism and autism.

(Yes, autism. Autism did not always refer to a psychological state of non-communication. Autism means only "selfism", and as late as 1980 you will find "autism" listed in *Roger's Thesaurus* as another word for self-absorption and egocentrism, with no hint of what we now call autism.) We are always trying to find words which sound more important than the meaning justifies. That is why people say "quintessential" instead of "essential". That is why, instead of using the word "important", it sounds more important if you use the word "seminal". As I did when I referred, two paragraphs back, to "Jonathon Green's seminal work *New Words*". Now, I don't know if it really is seminal, meaning influential and the beginning of something new and original. I certainly didn't mean that. I have no idea if Green's book has had any effect on

anyone except me. When I refer to "Jonathon Green's seminal book", I mean his handy little dictionary in which he has listed a lot of neologisms which often me a long trawl through bigger dictionaries which don't list them... But I don't say that. I say "seminal".

Other words which have recently become trendy and then been discarded? Certainly. There's "feral". And there's "cusp". There's "nodal". And there's "epiphany". And there's "shaman" and there's "mimetic" and there's "fatwa" and there's "jihad" and there's "formulaic" and there's "outreach" and there's "palimpsest"... Ah! Palimpsest. More of that tomorrow.

Correction and apology. Last week I said that "John Major's main task is now to identify the needs of the Tory Party". This of course should have read "John Major's main task is now to identify and satisfy the needs of the Tory Party". I am sorry if this caused any confusion.

0800 121 008

unit trusts

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING		1 month		3 months		DOLLAR		1 month		3 months		D-MARK	
Country	Spot					Spot							
US	12803	8-6	7-14	1200	-	1200	-	95-61	06-61				
Canada	2927	38-34	37-34	13206	-	9-8	-	60-58	06-59				
France	2125	43-53	43-53	24405	-	31-49	-	90-89	03-90				
Germany	23236	50-50	50-50	53087	-	40-45	-	273-263	03-270				
Japan	9887	43-58	43-58	52553	-	345-455	-	983-982	06-982				
Italy	1722	87-87	87-87	70-71	-	51-51	-	730-730	06-730				
Netherlands	12200	20-27	56-59	1200	-	44-45	-	82-80	06-80				
Belgium	92225	14-14	25-31	21292	-	75-85	-	213-812	06-213				
Denmark	10447	7-15	50-44	17328	-	39-39	-	236-347	06-237				
Finland	21935	2-4	50-44	17328	-	37-37	-	97-16	06-97				
Holland	10864	1-3	4-6	16093	-	3-4	-	15-15	06-15				
Norway	10335	10-71	70-10	65278	-	50-50	-	19-49	06-49				
Sweden	5-5	5-5	26-26	29854	-	6-6	-	43-40	06-43				
Switzerland	12481	1-5	32-32	65278	-	16-20	-	44-203	06-44				
United Kingdom	22200	79-71	29-37	12246	-	45-46	-	30-25	06-25				
West Germany	22200	61-70	29-37	12246	-	45-46	-	33-35	06-35				
Hong Kong	22200	61-70	29-37	12246	-	45-46	-	33-35	06-35				
Malaysia	20854	0-0	0-0	25806	-	77-80	-	80-85	06-80				
New Zealand	22723	7-42	20-23	14253	-	54-56	-	87-90	06-88				
Singapore	21844	0-0	0-0	14253	-	54-56	-	87-90	06-88				
South Africa	22239	0-0	0-0	2475	-	24-9	-	70-65	06-70				

Country	Starting	Dollar	Country	Starting	Dollar
Austria	72484	115376			

Brazil	15,220	12,749	Ormen	6,020	0,3850
China	3,928	3,291	Pakistan	54,452	26,930
Egypt	5,389	2,461	Paraguay	1,638	21,300
Finland	7,250	6,229	Portugal	246,443	155,750
Ghana	2,085,73	704,43	Rwanda	5,758	36,408
Greece	381,264	242,93	Russia	780,51	54,000
India	55,401	36,532	Saudi Arabia	89,625	49,428
Indonesia	4,476	4,338	Senegal	421,75	72,500
Nigeria	12,861	80,500	UAE	5,979	3,670

Notes: Figures are quoted against the year as at the end of the period (2002-03 for most cases). Figures are in millions of dollars.

Tourist Rates

Tourist Rates			
£ Bays	£ Bays	£ Bays	
Australia/Dollars	13500	Germany/France	7350
Australia/Pounds	18500	Germany/Greece	7350
Belgium/France	45300	Greece/Greece	37530
Canada/Dollars	20840	Hong Kong/Pakistan	11900
Cyprus/Pounds	07620	Indonesia/Pakistan	0825
Denmark/Dollars	16050	Italy/Italy	7350
Holland/Dollars	16050	Japan/Italy	7350
France/Pounds	73640	Malaysia/Italy	0500
		New Zealand/Dollars	21800
		Norway/France	10000
		Portugal/Pakistan	23500
		Spain/Pakistan	05300
		Sweden/Italy	10200
		Switzerland/France	1900
		Turkey/Italy	14670000
		United States/Dollars	1530

UK	Germany	US	Japan
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Base	57%	Discount	25%	Prime	87%	Discount	0%
France		Lombard	45%	Prime		Belgium	50%
Investment	35%	Caisse		Discount	52%	Discount	25%
Italy		Prime	55%	Spain		Central	30%
Discount	82%	Discount	50%	10 Day Repo	67%	Switzerland	
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden		Discount	10%
Advances	23%	Discount	32%	Repo (Net)	48%	Lombard	42%

Country	5 yr rate	Yield % FOM	10 yr yield % FOM	Country	5 yr rate	Yield % FOM	10 yr yield % FOM
USA	7.50	7.50	7.50	Japan	5.50	5.50	5.50
UK	7.50	7.50	7.50	France	5.50	5.50	5.50
Germany	5.50	5.50	5.50	Italy	5.50	5.50	5.50
Spain	5.50	5.50	5.50	Canada	5.50	5.50	5.50
Sweden	5.50	5.50	5.50	South Africa	5.50	5.50	5.50
Netherlands	5.50	5.50	5.50	Belgium	5.50	5.50	5.50
Australia	5.50	5.50	5.50	Switzerland	5.50	5.50	5.50
India	5.50	5.50	5.50	South Korea	5.50	5.50	5.50
China	5.50	5.50	5.50	Indonesia	5.50	5.50	5.50
South Korea	5.50	5.50	5.50	Malaysia	5.50	5.50	5.50
Japan	5.50	5.50	5.50	Philippines	5.50	5.50	5.50
France	5.50	5.50	5.50	Thailand	5.50	5.50	5.50
Italy	5.50	5.50	5.50	Vietnam	5.50	5.50	5.50
Canada	5.50	5.50	5.50	Laos	5.50	5.50	5.50
South Africa	5.50	5.50	5.50	Myanmar	5.50	5.50	5.50
Belgium	5.50	5.50	5.50	Burma	5.50	5.50	5.50
Switzerland	5.50	5.50	5.50	Cambodia	5.50	5.50	5.50
Australia	5.50	5.50	5.50	Laos	5.50	5.50	5.50
India	5.50	5.50	5.50	Myanmar	5.50	5.50	5.50
China	5.50	5.50	5.50	Burma	5.50	5.50	5.50
South Korea	5.50	5.50	5.50	Cambodia	5.50	5.50	5.50
Japan	5.50	5.50	5.50	Laos	5.50	5.50	5.50
France	5.50	5.50	5.50	Myanmar	5.50	5.50	5.50
Italy	5.50	5.50	5.50	Burma	5.50	5.50	5.50
Canada	5.50	5.50	5.50	Cambodia	5.50	5.50	5.50
South Africa	5.50	5.50	5.50	Laos	5.50	5.50	5.50
Belgium	5.50	5.50	5.50	Myanmar	5.50	5.50	5.50
Switzerland	5.50	5.50	5.50	Burma	5.50	5.50	5.50
Australia	5.50	5.50	5.50	Cambodia	5.50	5.50	5.50
India	5.50	5.50	5.50	Laos	5.50	5.50	5.50
China	5.50	5.50	5.50	Myanmar	5.50	5.50	5.50
South Korea	5.50	5.50	5.50	Burma	5.50	5.50	5.50
Japan	5.50	5.50	5.50	Cambodia	5.50	5.50	5.50
France	5.50	5.50	5.50	Laos	5.50	5.50	5.50
Italy	5.50	5.50	5.50	Myanmar	5.50	5.50	5.50
Canada	5.50	5.50	5.50	Burma	5.50	5.50	5.50
South Africa	5.50	5.50	5.50	Cambodia	5.50	5.50	5.50
Belgium	5.50	5.50	5.50	Laos	5.50	5.50	5.50
Switzerland	5.50	5.50	5.50	Myanmar	5.50	5.50	5.50
Australia	5.50	5.50	5.50	Burma	5.50	5.50	5.50
India	5.50	5.50	5.50	Cambodia	5.50	5.50	5.50
China	5.50	5.50	5.50	Laos	5.50	5.50	5.50
South Korea	5.50	5.50	5.50	Myanmar	5.50	5.50	5.50
Japan	5.50	5.50	5.50	Burma	5.50	5.50	5.50
France	5.50	5.50	5.50	Cambodia	5.50	5.50	5.50
Italy	5.50	5.50	5.50	Laos	5.50	5.50	5.50
Canada	5.50	5.50	5.50	Myanmar	5.50	5.50	5.50
South Africa	5.50	5.50	5.50	Burma	5.50	5.50	5.50
Belgium							

UK	71%	5.91	67%	7	Telecoms	8%	48.0	0%	5.91
US	87%	6.29	63%	656	Japan	120%	6.90	97%	7.72
Japan	5.6%	165	39%	751	Italy	9%	7.73	91%	8.34
Australia	8%	702	10%	751	Belgium	5%	4.78	7%	6.10
Germany	5.38%	4.94	6.25%	6.00	Sweden	17%	6.31	0%	7.12
France	5.1%	5.00	7.25%	5.99	ECU Zone	0%	5.07	7%	6.24

Source: HSBC Global Research * data calculated on local basis ** Denotes non-Leontyev

Money Market Rates

Interbank	5 7/8	6 1/8	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	6	6	6 1/8	6 1/8
Standing CDs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Local Authority Deps	5 1/2	5 1/4	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 1/8	6 1/8
Discount Market Deps	5 1/2	5 1/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 1/8	6 1/8
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dollar CDs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ECU Linked Dep	-	-	-	4 1/2	4 1/2	4 1/2	4 1/2	4 1/2	4 1/2	4 1/2

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	EstConts traded	Open Interest
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Liffe FTSE Index Option					
Settlement price: 4047.00	closing offer price			Call/Put	
Series	2000	4000	4050	4100	Total/Strike

Oct	105/1	55/3	15/14	1/57	..
Nov	131/17	92/28	58/46	32/72	..
Dec	158/35	127/48	84/68	66/93	..
Jan	190/52	148/68	113/86	87/110	..

Commodities

HYDROCARBONS		Metals		Volume		LAST STOCKS		chg																																																													
Aluminum HCB 100-0	5567	3	3670	165677	+	75																																																															
Aluminum May	1205	1465	1205	1465																																																																	
Copper A	9005-25	281	2	7056	16500	+	8003																																																														
Lead 1	75-4	198	50	1857	16500	+	65																																																														
Gold 100	9005-700	1000	7000	1000	7000	+	50																																																														
1 lb	5005-45	5005-6000	1000	2000	16500	+	75																																																														
Zinc	50-4	1000	1	2000	16500	+	75																																																														
Commodity Consensus		75	5000	100	1000																																																																
Exchange Rate	12049	12000	100	100	100																																																																
Stock volumes & change in prices as of 10/10/95																																																																					
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">PRECIOUS METALS</th> <th colspan="2">S</th> <th colspan="2">C</th> <th colspan="2">S</th> <th colspan="2">S</th> </tr> <tr> <th>per lot (oz)</th> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Platinum</td> <td>35450</td> <td>12000</td> <td>12000</td> <td>350</td> <td>525</td> <td>165000</td> <td>373200</td> <td>236200</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Palladium</td> <td>18255</td> <td>7345</td> <td>18000</td> <td>201</td> <td>157</td> <td>500</td> <td>88100</td> <td>26000</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gold 100</td> <td>20000</td> <td>20000</td> <td>20000</td> <td>50</td> <td>50</td> <td>165000</td> <td>381000</td> <td>282000</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gold Bull</td> <td>20100</td> <td>20000</td> <td>20000</td> <td>50</td> <td>50</td> <td>165000</td> <td>381000</td> <td>282000</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>										PRECIOUS METALS		S		C		S		S		per lot (oz)										Platinum	35450	12000	12000	350	525	165000	373200	236200		Palladium	18255	7345	18000	201	157	500	88100	26000		Gold 100	20000	20000	20000	50	50	165000	381000	282000		Gold Bull	20100	20000	20000	50	50	165000	381000	282000	
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Cocoa		Coffee		Barley		Potatoes		Potatoes	
LCE	£/ton	LCE	\$/tonne	LCE	£/tonne	LCE	£/tonne	AIA	Gd/100kg
Nov	905	Nov	120	Nov	925	Nov	3250		

Mar	982	Mar	1459	Mar	8675	Mar	7400	Feb	73
May	1005	May	1422	May	10000	Apr	7400	Apr	106
Vol	5,598	Vol	3,486	Vol	21				
White Sugar	Freight	Wheat		Corn		1200 Price			
LCE	\$/tonne	LCE	\$/cwt	LCE	\$/tonne	CBOT#			
Dec	39880	Oct	140	Nov	9285		14-10		9670
Mar	39880	Mar	140	Apr	9285		28-10	39475	39850
May	39200	Vol	140	Mar	10100		29-10	39550	29C75
Vol	3,891	Indian	1392	Vol	827	May	30-10	39700	39825

Other Soya (Agricultural)				Source: CIG			
Nov	Maine (No.3)	\$/tonne	135.50	Nov-Jan	Soya Oil	FL/100kg	90.50
Oct-Nov	Capra (t)	\$/tonne	199.00	Sep/Oct	Coconut Oil (t)	\$/tonne	782.00

[illegible]

COMMODITY INDICES							
*BSC Indices	Base date	+Spot	%Day Chg	Dec 31st	%Yr-to-dtg	Year ago	%Yr chg
Index	1970=100	210.56	+1.00	203.50	+7.06	191.01	+6.33
Average of 20	1970=100	214.98	+0.44	208.75	+6.72	207.71	+5.14

Pyrazole	1970=100	+43.6	1970=100		
Energy	1970=100	82.1	+193	71.3	+10.8
Industrial Metals	1970=100	53.82	-108	193.32	-38.70
Livestock	1970=100	98.83	-173	82.71	+408
Processed Metals	1970=100	48.34	+104	459.86	-752

Source: Colonial, Sachs & Co. *CSC is a trademark and servicemark of Colonial, Sachs & Co. †Data as of 14 Oct '91

100 Largest Insurance Funds

[illegible]

UNIT TRUST GUIDE
 ex dividend
 ext charge applies
 when units are sold
 formerly 'offer'
 formerly 'bid'
 Non SIB recognised funds

SPORT

'But are the measures too Draconian? I think they are. I sense an almost religious fervour to clean things up, almost to sanitise the game. Are things really that bad?'
Howard Wilkinson on the refereeing revolution

Page 26

Sport is Murdoch's 'battering ram' for pay TV

Sports politics

ROBERT MILLIKEN
reports from Sydney

Rupert Murdoch yesterday signalled his plan to take an even more aggressive approach towards buying television rights for leading sports when he announced that he intended to use sport as a "battering ram" for the expansion of his global pay television network.

He told the annual meeting in Adelaide of News Corporation, of which he is chairman and chief executive: "Sport absolutely overpowers film and everything else in the entertainment genre."

"Football, of all sports, is number one. Look at what we have done in Britain with our Premier League soccer, and now with the rugby union and rugby league in the United Kingdom as well. We expect the next three World Cups will have a significant place on our platforms. Sport will remain very important and we will be investing in and acquiring long-term rights."

Murdoch was speaking with the assurance of someone whose risk-taking has proved that sports, along with big Hollywood movies, are the two biggest money spinners underwriting his pay television ventures. In Britain, his acquisition

of Premier League has been crucial in turning BSkyB into one of News Corporation's most booming businesses (a fact underlined when BSkyB shares rose 18p to 676.5p yesterday, increasing its stock market value £309m to £11.64bn).

In the United States, he has a lucrative contract with the National Football League, showing many of the best American football games on Fox Television, his free-to-air network. "Fox has been very much involved, or will be involved in the next week, in the finals of the World Baseball Series, for which we expect great ratings," he said yesterday.

Murdoch also made it clear

that he would be using sport as a bridgehead to launch American Sky Broadcasting, his new pay television venture in the United States in partnership with MCI Communications, the giant telecommunications company. American Sky will have more than 200 channels and will be launched late next year.

The Murdoch obsession with sport extends to Asia as well, where his Star satellite network stretches from China to India. "[There is] one development which is very pleasing in our sports programming in India, which was beginning to get very expensive," Murdoch said. "We have now formed a partnership with our former sports pro-

gramming competitor, ESPN of the United States.

"We have the long-term rights in most countries to major sporting events and we will be doing in Asia what we intend to do elsewhere in the world, that is, use sports as a 'battering ram' and a lead offering in all our pay television operations."

It was in Australia where Murdoch's battering ram almost ended as a pile of splinters in his launch of Foxtel, his pay television venture there which News Corporation runs in partnership with Telstra, the state-owned telecommunications company. Absolutely crucial to Foxtel's success was Murdoch's attempt to wrench control of rug-

by league, one of the most popular sports in Australia, from the game's established authorities and form his own Super League of international competition with Britain and New Zealand.

Speared by Lachlan Murdoch, his son and apparent heir, and Ken Cowley, his most trusted Australian lieutenant, Murdoch's organisation poured more than A\$500m (£150m) into launching Super League, only to see it crushed by a Federal Court ruling last year that banned Super League from starting before the end of the decade.

The legal challenge came from the Australian Rugby League, the official body, supported by Optus Vision, Foxtel's

rival cable TV company that had exclusive pay TV rights to rugby league. Korry Packer, Murdoch's rival, is a partner in Optus Vision. The ruling would have left Foxtel with no leading winter sport, and its future in doubt.

Ten days ago, an appeal court delivered a stunning victory to Mr Murdoch when it overturned the earlier decision, ruled that "loyalty agreements" between players and the Australian Rugby League were null and void and allowed Super League to start from next year.

Although the official game plans a further appeal to the High Court, Murdoch is now in a perfect position to call the shots over the future of rugby



Murdoch: Business booming

league. No one seriously believes that Australia can sustain two rival competitions and a merger, on Murdoch's terms, seems on the cards.

United face anxious wait for Pallister

Football

GLENN MOORE
reports from Istanbul

Manchester United tonight extend their European odyssey into Asia as they embark upon the crucial stage of their Champions' League campaign.

They play the Turkish champions, Fenerbahce, who are based across the Bosphorus, the strait which divides European Turkey from its much larger Asian part. It is United's first visit in 40 years in Europe.

Alex Ferguson, the United manager, believes the two matches with Fenerbahce will decide who qualifies from Group C behind the favourites, Juventus. The return is in a fortnight in Manchester.

"I'll be satisfied with a point," Ferguson said yesterday, "something to take back to Old Trafford where our European record is fantastic."

The Turkish champions are aware of that. Having narrowly lost at home to Juventus, and drawn away to the group's weakest team, Rapid Vienna, they have two points less than United. Vefa Kuguk, their vice-president, admitted: "If we don't win we are finished."

Ferguson will not know his team until this morning when he discovers how a quintet of players have reacted to last night's training session. Gary Pallister, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Jordi Cruyff and David May are all

doubts, with Pallister the main concern.

If he is not fit, May and Ronnie Johnsen will continue the partnership which denied Liverpool. If he is, May may be unlucky although Johnsen could play in midfield.

Though fit, Eric Cantona is another concern. The Frenchman confessed that he had "forgotten he could play as badly" as he did against Liverpool. "It has been a difficult week for him," Ferguson said. "He's been training on his own while the others [10 players] have been on international duty or injured. It cannot have been easy for him, he is a player who needs to train." Ferguson added: "It doesn't worry me."

Nevertheless, it seems every time United play in Europe one writes "Cantona is yet to prove himself in Europe". Apart from one performance for Leeds against Stuttgart it remains true.

Of his younger players Ferguson said: "They were overawed by Juventus but they started to express themselves in the second half. I expect them to do that tomorrow. It was not a crime but they won't let me down again."

Fenerbahce, coached by Sebastian Lazaroni, once manager of Brazil, have their own mercurial talents, notably Emil Kostadinov. His last-minute goal denied France, and Cantona, a place in the 1994 World

Cup finals. He has been less effective since, flitting from club to club and, though he scored against Maccabi Tel Aviv in the preliminary round, he was then sent off. He returns from suspension tonight to partner the prolific Bosnian, Elvir Bolic.

In midfield is Jay-Jay Okocha, the gifted young Nigerian, while his Olympic gold-medal winning team-mate, Uche Okechukwu, partners Denmark's Jes Høgh at the back. A clutch of Turkish internationals, including the promising goalkeeper Recber Rustu, make up the side.

An angry Høgh yesterday denied comments attributed to him in an English Sunday tabloid suggesting United, especially his international team-mate Peter Schmeichel, had reason to fear Istanbul. "The reporter made it all up," Høgh said.

Indeed, contrary to reports elsewhere yesterday, United's reception in this city of minarets and mosques has been warm in the nicest sense. "There have been no problems at all," Ferguson said.

The match is a 26,000 sell-out with less than 300 of those being from Manchester. One unofficial group of 55 was expected in last night containing five known hooligans.

With the help of English police "spotters" Turkish officials were hoping to deport them immediately they arrived at the airport.



Alex Ferguson fields questions yesterday as his team prepares for tonight's Champions' League game in Istanbul Photograph: Ross Kerr/Allsport

The referee, Manuel Diaz Vega, controlled England's opening Euro 96 game with Switzerland. He also sent off Paul Gascoigne, deservedly, in

Dortmund in last year's Champions' League. Though regarded as a showman in his native Spain he is not easily intimidated in Europe.

While United have never played Fenerbahce before, their neighbours, City, have. Manchester City's only European Cup entry, 28 years ago, ended

at Fenerbahce's hands. Aston Villa and Arsenal have since knocked Fenerbahce out in Europe without conceding a goal. Tonight, on the pitch where

Graeme Souness, infamously and provocatively, planted a Galatasaray flag last season, United will be aiming to make their own mark.

Sunderland will carry on battling for success

Kevin Ball insists Sunderland are not worried about their disciplinary difficulties with Premier League referees despite an early-season rash of red cards.

Richard Ord became Sunderland's fourth sending-off of the season when he stamped on the England striker Nick Barmby during last night's 2-2 draw against Middlesbrough at Roker Park.

Ord, who was also dismissed at Derby last month, is in trouble with the Football Association and his manager, Peter Reid, with a three-match ban for violent conduct and a hefty club fine the likely outcome.

Two other Sunderland players have also been sent off so far this season, but Ball makes no apology for the fierce commitment which he believes is Sunderland's greatest strength. "This side's got a tremendous will to win and we're going to

go out and battle away in every game," Ball said. "And if that means you're walking a bit of a tightrope with certain referees, so be it."

"Last year we were a committed side. That's what won us the championship. We went out in every game and we went out with the will to win. In this league you've got to combine that commitment with ability and I think we do that."

Ord's dismissal was Sunderland's third in two games with Martin Scott and Paul Stewart shown the red card during the 2-0 defeat at Arsenal, although Stewart's dismissal for handball has since been overturned, with the referee Paul Danson admitting he was mistaken.

Reid has hinted that he will come down heavily on Ord, who had to sit out the match at Highbury because he was serving a suspension from his sending-off

at Derby, and now has another ban looming.

The final Wear-Tees derby at Roker Park ahead of Sunderland's move to a new stadium at Wearmouth provided an entertaining match for the Sky TV cameras and an answer to the critics who had accused Reid's goal-slay team of being negative.

But a defiant Ball insists that the "spoilers" tag has not bothered the players, who are fully focused on Premiership survival.

"We're not too fussed about whether people think we're entertaining or not," he said. "Our aim is to go out and win games and get points, and if people don't think we're entertaining that's up to them."

"We're not really bothered about the doubters. We're confident in our ability and we just go about doing our job. People can say and do what they want."

Tomba will miss the opening event of World Cup season

Skiing

Alberto Tomba, returning to a favourite theme, was quoted yesterday as saying that the Alpine World Cup circuit should be scrapped.

Italian newspapers also quoted the world and Olympic champion as saying that he would skip the season's opening race in Austria and might also decide against travelling to the United States but would decide nearer the date.

"I have always said that the classics, the World Champi-

onships and the Olympics were enough," the daily *Gazzetta dello Sport* quoted Tomba as telling reporters at an awards ceremony in the northern town of Biella on Monday.

Tomba, who said earlier this year that he had considered retiring after winning two gold medals at the Sierra Nevada World Championships in February, has changed his training schedule and reduced his workload. "I will decide later whether to start the season in the United States or at Madonna di Campiglio," said Tomba, who has already committed

himself to competing in the 1997 World Championships in the Italian resort of Sestriere.

"I have done half as much training on snow as last year so I may delay my start as a result. I will do some trials at the end of the month to see how the motor is working," he said. "At the moment I should be about ready, I am probably faster but a bit less powerful."

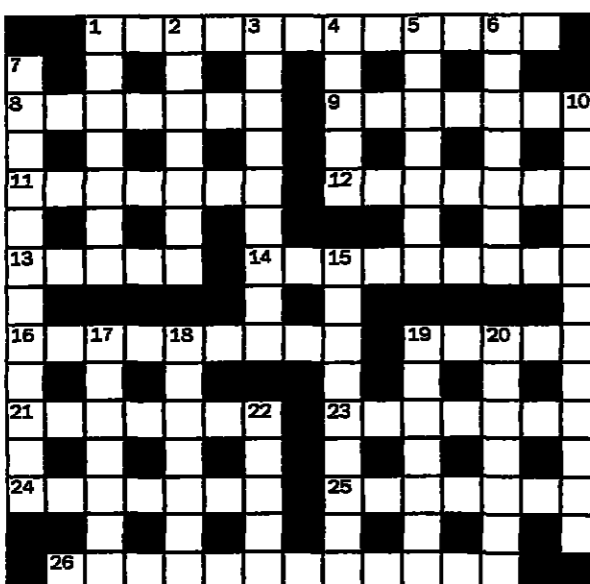
The season starts in Soldeu, Austria on 26-27 October and then moves to Park City, Utah on 21 November. Madonna di Campiglio hosts a race on 17 December.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

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By Aquila

Thursday's Solution



ALBERTO TOMBA
GRAEME SOUNESS
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
FOOTBALL
RAUCOUS
BREMI
A R M E
GOAL
PRIMROSE
Y S R N E
COHERENT
PYRENE
F U T E L K E
OUTLINE
RALLING
S I U E C U E
SHOWS
CASTLE
I O E N T I N I
LIKELIHOOD
BERNIE

- ACROSS**
- Admirable type Harrow is turning out (12)
 - School dictionary in near-ruin (7)
 - Love-plot thickening in the kitchen (7)
 - Northern climbing starting to develop (7)
 - Standing in Piccadilly, for example (7)
 - Lines often heard in Scotland? (5)
 - Show allergy to insects, using substances in chemical tests (9)
 - Hard as iron - it's a new way! (9)
 - Excited male sheep? (3,2)
 - Non-belligerent, with stick not in use? (7)
 - Formula One heartless in Turin, possibly (7)
 - Orkney-designed town on the Hudson River (7)
- DOWN**
- Papers higher in price? It's simply an exercise! (5-2)
 - Never getting on, seemingly? (7)
 - Sonata air broadcast in hospitals (9)
 - County flags (5)
 - Study a small part and apply again (7)
 - Sacking an old soldier (7)
 - Photograph of Sheerness? (12)
 - London Pride is uniquely charming! (4-2-6)
 - Radio-sets tuned for space-travellers (9)
 - He turns his nose up at stewed prunes, right? (7)
- ACROSS**
- As a poet, I am changing a point in speech (7)
 - Direct, intense sort of creator (12)

- DOWN**
- Eddy joins cricket-side as a medic (7)
 - Labour of carrying in harvest time? (7)
 - Teaching out in it, unusually (7)
 - Long Island's shorter yarn (5)